[redacted]

CANTERBURY TALES.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

587

BY HARRIET LEE.

On [illegible] wings let vagrant Fancy soar,
  Nor [illegible] ay haunt the sunny realms of joy;
But now [illegible] the shades of life explore,
  Though [illegible] nd and sight of woe annoy.
BEATTIE.

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THE POET'S ADDRESS.

"IF you find my day-dreams as agreeable as I have done, we may henceforward recite Tales without going to Canterbury, and travel half the world over without quitting our own dear fire-ſides."—Such, courteous Reader, were the words with which we laſt parted*; and they were the words of truth. Should you be good-naturedly diſpoſed, you will not inquire minutely where the travellers were picked up by whom the following ſtories are related; but will continue to ramble on, with me, through the regions of imagination, without much anxiety as to the object of the journey, provided the road prove but pleaſant.

* *Vide* Volume the Third.

THE

GERMAN'S TALE.

KRUITZNER.

——— What is't that takes from thee
Thy comfort, pleaſure, and thy golden ſleep?
Why doſt thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And ſtart ſo often when thou ſitt'ſt alone?
Why haſt thou loſt the freſh blood in thy cheek?
Oh! what portents are theſe?

SHAKSPEARE.

TOWARDS the end of the month of February, in a winter memorably ſevere, a man, his wife, and their ſon, a boy not ſeven years of age, arrived at M——, an obſcure town on the northern frontier of Sileſia, within the eſtates of the Count Prince de

T——. A fever that attacked the hufband, together with an unexpected and heavy fall of fnow, impeded all further advance towards Bohemia, their oftenfible place of deftination. The malady proved dangerous: and the refources of benevolence (for the travellers were fufpected to be indigent) would have been foon exhaufted in a petty German diftrict, not abounding in religious foundations or opulent neighbours.

The town, though in itfelf extremely infignificant, had been raifed to temporary confideration fome years before by the refidence of the Prince, who had chofen to pafs on that fpot the period of a political difgrace; and his departure had again reduced it to its original obfcurity. The inhabitants of M—— might with great juftice be divided exactly into two claffes: the poor who *were* proud, and the poor who were not. The former dwelt in a fmall number

of

of ill-built houſes confuſedly huddled together, and dignified with the title of a Bourg; where, under the claims of a ſort of antiquated and worn-out nobility, they indulged in arrogance and ſloth. The latter, who were diſtributed over a long, ſtraggling, and half-ruined ſuburb, were mere bourgeois, with wants and ideas equally contracted to their ſituation: nor had the two claſſes any thing in common but that ſelfiſhneſs and inertneſs which is the general reſult of ignorance.

Frederick Kruitzner, for ſo the ſtranger was called, and his unfortunate family, continued, therefore, to languiſh during more than ten days, unnoticed by any body but their hoſt; who ſo far concerned himſelf about their future fate, as, in the progreſs of that time, to have made up his account that the ſaid Kruitzner ſhould not die in his houſe; for which reaſon he deemed it would

be convenient ſpeedily to remove him from it. For reaſons, doubtleſs, however, more merciful and wiſe, Providence had decreed that Kruitzner ſhould not at that critical period die at all: and though this conviction ſeemed to give but little ſatisfaction to any human beings, his wife and child excepted, it is probable that in the region of eternal bleſſedneſs which is to be occupied by minds, not bodies, the grateful and pious expanſion of theirs would fill a larger circle in the ſphere of exiſtence than the ſouls of twenty—aye, a hundred—ſuch beings as their hoſt at M——: which hundred, indeed, ſtripped of their bulky corporeal clothing, would, perhaps, have formed collectively ſo ſmall a maſs as might almoſt ſeem to demand the eye of Omniſcience to diſcover any portion of ſoul at all!

Be that as it may, Kruitzner, after having juſt

juſt looked, as it were, into the chaſm which no ray, ſave that of Faith, ever yet penetrated, ſuddenly found the vital ſprings once more in motion. The ſeverity of the ſeaſon, however, was ſtill ſuch as to preclude the poſſibility of paſſing forward with ſafety: had it been even otherwiſe, Kruitzner, though recovering, was yet too weak to undertake a journey of ſuch length: it was even ſuſpected that his reſources no longer permitted him to attempt it. Yet had he not hitherto appeared to be abſolutely penniless; and there was that in the countenance of Joſephine, his wife, which announced a magnanimous confidence in the future rarely to be found in decided and habitual poverty. Joſephine was, indeed, of a caſt of woman not often ſeen. It would have been difficult to ſay ſhe had perfect beauty, but ſhe had looks that might have awed or won a world. They had indeed even actually won, to a certain degree of intereſt

he was not accuſtomed to feel, the Intendant for the Prince de T——; and as that quarter, or rather ſuburb, of the city in which his highneſs's palace ſtood contained ſeveral houſes adjacent to it not tenanted, and indeed, from the long abſence of the Prince, hardly tenantable, though they had once been ſplendidly filled, the Intendant, who was not unacquainted with the fears and wiſhes of Kruitzner's hoſt, had for ſome time revolved in his mind the magnificent project of permitting the invalid and his wife to ſhelter themſelves under the roof of one of theſe: judiciouſly calculating that the tax of gratitude he ſhould thereby impoſe would moſt probably be paid preciſely in the manner he would himſelf deſire: namely, by the death of one, and the life of the other; or if, contrary to probability, both ſhould happen to live, he truſted to future contingencies to reward him in ſome way for this extraordinary act of bounty.

It

It could not be doubted but the overture was received with that ſenſibility it ſeemed to demand, and which the forlorn ſituation of the parties was calculated to inſpire them with. On the evening of a very rainy day, therefore, the invalid and his family, conſtrained by hard neceſſity, and the cold countenance of their hoſt, departed to take poſſeſſion of their new, or rather old, habitation. The few ruined conduits that ran through the town poured black and muddy torrents into the river, and a pale ſtreak of crimſon on the horizon announced the ſetting ſun, whoſe influence had ſuſpended the ſtorm; while, through the ſmoaky windows of thoſe houſes that had glaſs ones, the faces of their inmates were indiſtinctly ſeen, alternately drawn thither by the wheels of the Intendant's crazy calèche, under ſhelter of which he had graciouſly offered to convey Kruitzner to his new abode. With much ſatisfaction their hoſt

ſaw

ſaw the family depart; not without receiving, from their ſmall reſources, a payment ſufficiently ſcanty, indeed, though all they could beſtow, in acknowledgment of his ſervices. Joſephine, with a heart relieved by the conveyance ſhe had found for her huſband, penſively followed him, holding her little ſon by the hand: ſome times wading with difficulty through the mire; at others, covered by the water which ſtreamed from the eaves of the houſes; and anxiouſly watching the calèche, as it jogged on at a pace not much quicker than her own.

It was among the advantages of their new accommodation that they had permiſſion to fetch wood from the Prince's ſtores; and, perhaps, there is nobody who does not know the cheerfulneſs of a blazing fire. If any ſuch perſons there are, let them take a walk, like Joſephine, through the moiſt

moiſt atmoſphere of a low, comfortleſs town; and if, like her, they happen to ſit down afterwards with a beloved huſband and child round the ſocial hearth, they will, probably, not envy the firſt monarch in Europe his courtiers, his luſtres, or his carpets. Happineſs! indefinable good!—perhaps beſt extracted from miſery!——Ah, could we but keep thee!——Yet, Joſephine *did* keep thee—for the night at leaſt: for ſhe poſſeſſed certain materials in her own boſom to which thy precious ore, though not inſeparable from, naturally adheres.—Not ſo Kruitzner! *his* ſlumbers were diſturbed both by ſleeping and waking viſions, to which, perhaps, the impreſſion of external objects on the organs of ſenſe as much contributed as the yet uncertain ſtate of his health. For the firſt time, after a tedious confinement, he had that evening ſeen day-light and the ſun. He had believed he ſhould never ſee it

more,

more, and to his dim eye it had all the effect of a new object. The breath of heaven, too, had blown upon his face; and recollections, long torpid under the heavy hand of ſickneſs, were awakened in his heart. During the tedious vigils of the night, he ſurveyed with wondering and curious eyes the tarniſhed ſplendor of the bed and room into which he was thus ſtrangely thrown; and though ſuperſtition peopled it not to him, as it might have done to thoſe of his neighbours who knew the ſtories attached to it, that gloom which is haunted by "the ghoſts of our departed joys" needs no other ſpectre to fill it.

In the ſolitude and obſcurity of their ſpacious and comfortleſs manſion, days and days now paſt over the heads of Kruitzner and his wife. Deep ſnow, in the interim, capped the high mountains which ſepa-rated them from Bohemia; floods inun-

dated

dated the country; cold chilled the human ſpecies; and it ſeemed as if the vital principle contracted hourly into a narrower circle, till the little town of M—— became the point at which it ſtopt. On thoſe days when the ſun broke through the cheerleſs atmoſphere, Kruitzner was occaſionally ſeen turning up the ground in the garden for the few winter roots that afforded. It was obſerved that he was ſtill pale, even to ſallowneſs; that he had powerful features, a brow marked by ſorrow, and an eye of no very ſtriking effect in his countenance, unleſs animated by ſome ſudden emotion, when it darted forward a fire that ſeemed like new-created light upon the world. From his own habitation he never ſtirred; and, as that habitation was of no very good report in the neighbourhood, he was little troubled with viſitors. Sometimes, indeed, the wife of the poſt-maſter condeſcended to look in upon Madame Kruitzner, when the Intendant favoured her

with

with a ſeat in his bone-ſetting conveyance. On ſuch occaſions the good lady, who had only three faults—pride, curioſity, and the love of talking,—ſeldom came without bringing to the little boy pots of conſerves, ſugar-cakes, and ſuch other houſewifely preſents as coſt nothing to the donor and gratify the appetites common to children. When this happened, ſhe did not fail, however, to obſerve, though by ſtealth as it were, the keen air of famine with which the boy would devour her cates; accompanied ſometimes with thin ſlices of bread, which his mother ſparingly cut for him; while his father, in melancholy ſilence, would lean his elbows on his knees, and, covering his face with his hands, only now and then caſt wild and eager glances upon his wife and child. Theſe temporary ſtarts of ſenſibility excepted, Kruitzner was ſombre, abſtracted, and frequently employed in writing. Yet to whom his letters were addreſſed remained a profound ſecret;

ſecret;—the good lady, though ſhe had not neglected to queſtion her huſband duly on the ſubject, not having been able to extort the ſmalleſt information from him. For though Weilburg, ſuch was the name of the poſt-maſter, was not excellent at keeping a ſecret, he was at leaſt more diſcreet than to confide it to his wife. In this inſtance, however, his merit was ſmall, ſince, in fact, there was, as far as letters were concerned, no ſecret to keep: Kruitzner's, if indeed he wrote any, never being known to reach the poſt-office.

Mr. Weilburg was, nevertheleſs, a man of no ſmall importance in his department: he was believed to be rich; his wife claimed a ſort of remote and left-handed relationſhip to the Prince himſelf; and had been even noticed before her marriage by a certain Counteſs who had formerly occupied the very houſe lately lent on ſufferance

ance to the Kruitzners. Of this Countefs ftrange things had been reported when fhe was alive, and ftrange things continued to be reported now that fhe was fuppofed to be dead. She was ftrongly furmifed to have been the chère amie of his Highnefs; and, as fame related, had, in a fit of jealoufy, deftroyed herfelf, in one of thofe very apartments the Kruitzners then inhabited. Other reports, indeed, averred that, far from committing any fuch unchriftian-like act, fhe had accompanied the Prince in his berlin on the road to Vienna; but as fhe certainly had not been feen to depart from her own roof, and as an air of myftery had been, perhaps voluntarily, thrown over the bufinefs, in order to fave a half-ruined reputation, the whole difgrace had been judicioufly transferred to that which could beft bear it—namely, the houfe; which, to a certain degree, ftood profcribed. That under fuch circum-

ftances,

ſtances, Madame Weilburg ſhould become a viſitor there, ſeemed a little extraordinary: but it is poſſible that ſhe had either ſtrength of mind or authentic information enough to know the futility of theſe ſuſpicions:— or, it may be preſumed, that, having once taſted the pleaſures of grandeur and luxury in that very houſe, and ſeeing in Joſephine an extraordinary as well as faſcinating character, both of form and mind, ſhe did not think it improbable that circumſtances might bring back the days which were paſt.

To Mr. Weilburg the perſon only of Joſephine was yet known; though he might almoſt have been ſaid to have the hearts and heads of the whole little community of M—— in his poſſeſſion; ſince his authority in the poſt-office made every thing that was intereſting to either paſs through his hands. Thoſe who have been

present at the opening of the bags, and delivery of the letters, alone know what a scene of perturbation and anxiety such occasions present, even in peaceful days; but in time of war, as was then the case, how many hands are stretched out, how many cheeks are flushed, how many hearts palpitate with hope, or sink with despondency! The names of a son—a brother—a father—a husband—a lover—tremble, in imperfect and half-suppressed sounds, on the lips of the standers-by; yet no decided one escapes: the strong convulsions of the mind most sensitively shrink from observation, and each retires into himself to devour the pang or the joy of the moment! Even in the town of M——, insulated as it seemed in creation, a cipher, only swelling that great aggregate termed society, these feelings were confusedly understood; and they frequently led to developements of circumstances or character, by which Weilburg

knew

knew how to profit. Nothing of this, however, had yet occurred in the caſe of Madame Kruitzner. She had at firſt attracted his notice by a certain exterior of grandeur he was unable to comprehend. "This woman is nobody," ſaid he to himſelf, whenever he ſaw her at a diſtance, in her ſnow ſhoes, her cloſe peliſſe lined with common ſkins, and her fur cap, marking her fine brow, and the correct outline of her features; while the little Marcellin at her ſide ſhowed in his blooming countenance the exact miniature of hers; — "this woman can be nobody, who is thus able to encounter the ſeverity of ſuch a ſeaſon! Yet what a ſtep! what a walk! one ſhould ſwear it was a coronation, inſtead of the buſineſs of a domeſtic, that ſhe is engaged in!" Madame Kruitzner, meantime, wholly unconſcious of the comments that were made on her, with ſober and perſevering equanimity always

 attended

attended the arrival of the courier, and always, hitherto, in vain. — Now and then, indeed, ſhe was obſerved to drop a tear when the child complained of cold or fatigue, which he never did till they were returning: for, by a ſort of affectionate ſympathy, the elaſtic ſtep of the mother ſeemed to invigorate her young companion.

A certain confidential communication that paſſed at this juncture made the inquiries of Madame Kruitzner more accurately obſerved than before. To the two important characters of poſtmaſter and intendant the town added a third, ſeldom omitted in any diſtrict however ſmall; namely, a lawyer;—or rather one who called himſelf ſuch: for the more honourable part of his fraternity would probably have alike diſclaimed his pretenſions and his practice. He was a buſy, officious ſort of perſonage, who knew almoſt every

thing

thing better than law; and exactly among that servile class of his profession who are employed to embroil a cause—an occupation which the dishonesty of their clients, not less than their own, renders, it is to be feared, full as profitable as the ending one. But though Mr. Idenstein (for such was his name) professed to live by his talents, those who knew him best were inclined to think it was by the exercise of one only—the talent of being useful.—It proved, however, in this case, as in many others, a host in itself; for it made him always an acceptable guest at the only two good tables in town, the Intendant's and Weilburg's; which, as he was needy, was an advantage he failed not to profit by. To the Intendant he particularly addrest himself, in the hope of obtaining his countenance, at some future period, towards a more extensive and advantageous establish-

ment than could be found at M——; where, although the ſpirit of litigation abounded, the body and ſinews were wanting. The Intendant, on his ſide, was liberal of *promiſes*; for he had, in reality, no intention of parting with Idenſtein: having himſelf, as he often declared, more occaſion for law, (for he very judiciouſly ſeldom termed it juſtice) in the management of the Prince's concerns, than almoſt any man within the diſtrict. Idenſtein's employment in Weilburg's houſe was of a lighter nature, and one better ſuited to his taſte: for it chiefly conſiſted in retailing all the intrigues of the neighbourhood to his hoſteſs; which, as he was not malicious, but only credulous and vain, he often did with ſome pleaſantry, and without interruption from her huſband—a ſly, quiet, ſtagnant ſort of character, more apt to liſten than to talk; and one who thus, under the

the appearance of a dull taciturnity, concealed a diſpoſition no leſs frivolous and inquiſitive than that of his wife.

Various inquiries, ſuppoſed to be ſet on foot by a great man, now directed the attention of this reſpectable trio to Kruitzner and his family. There was, indeed, no certainty, and, in ſome reſpects, little probability, of their being the objects of the inquiry; but idleneſs and curioſity had marked them out as ſuch. The perſons concerned in forwarding it were at leaſt aſſured that no ill conſequence could reſult to themſelves; nor was any one amongſt them of a character to advert to the evil it might produce to others. Sly conjectures, crafty obſervations, together with a ſort of petty activity, formed the habit of their minds; and this habit ſpontaneouſly directed itſelf to every thing where there was the ſmalleſt appearance of myſtery. That

of want is, alas! too painful to the initiated not to bid them ſhrink with reluctance from the developement. Kruitzner and his wife, lulled into temporary ſecurity, nevertheleſs believed they had, in their preſent condition, no other evil to contend with: nor had it hitherto occurred to them to ſuſpect, that, while they were ſtriving to ſnatch all the repoſe that poverty and ſorrowful recollections would allow, the ſnare was ſecretly winding around that threatened finally to deſtroy it.

That repoſe, precarious thus in its nature, was nevertheleſs every day fading from their graſp, even while they were yet ignorant that any one was at hand to tear it from them. Their retreat at M——, which had in the firſt inſtance promiſed them little elſe than a grave, appeared, from the circumſtances in which they were involved, to ſhut them out almoſt as

completely from the reft of the world as if they had really been buried there. Stationed within that narrow limit, and devoid of the means either to advance or recede, they found themfelves in the moft frightful of all folitudes—that of the foul: and though there is a principle in nature, and a ftill ftronger in love, which obliges us to rejoice, defpite of paft calamities, in the recovery of a being whom death alone feems capable of fheltering from future ones, yet did the faint pleafure of unexpected convalefcence daily give way, even in both, to the moft racking inquietude. The good genius of Jofephine, for on her a good genius ftill attended, had, neverthelefs, fo far favoured them, that the only letter fhe had ever fent from M——, written immediately on her arrival there, and at the critical moment, as it feemed, of her hufband's fate, had, by means of the obfcurity in which fhe was then plunged,

plunged, fortunately escaped the cognisance of Weilburg; who, except on occasions of interest or curiosity, seldom executed his employment in person. The mere superscription of that letter would have enlightened him more effectually than his own ingenuity, or even that of his assistants, ever succeeded in doing: but it had been carried to the office late at night by Josephine herself, thrown hastily into the bags, and the answer to it—the important, and anxiously expected answer—never arrived.

Sanguine as the parties concerned in the present scrutiny respecting Kruitzner and his wife might originally be, they had very soon opportunity to perceive that there was either little to discover, or that the discovery would not be easily made. The habitual reserve of his character had, from the first, afforded small hope of success: and in hers there was a generous plainness

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and candour that defeated, even without intending it, the little arts of a ſophiſticated and frivolous mind. It was in vain for Madame Weilburg to obſerve—" that the delicate hands of her new acquaintance were never fitted for thoſe ſervile offices in which ſhe was employed:" in vain did the good lady wonder, " that Madame Kruitzner had not profited by the kind diſ- poſitions of the Intendant, to ſolicit ſome appointments for her huſband in the houſe-hold of the Prince;" even her happy pro-gnoſtics upon the promiſing countenance of Marcellin were thrown away. Joſephine was little likely to be touched with the coarſe flattery of one whoſe penetration into her condition or her character was ſo ſmall: and though a grateful ſenſe of ſome trifling obligations, together with a natural indulgence to the foibles of others, taught her, on theſe occaſions, to practiſe an ex-traordinary ſelf-command, it was not poſ-

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ſible for her always to diſguiſe that reſtleſſneſs and impatience which ſprings from an agitated heart.

During the firſt days of this intercourſe the Intendant himſelf frequently made one of the party; but he had juſt that ſort of underſtanding which informed him he was of all men living leaſt calculated to anſwer his own purpoſe of winding into confidence. He had gained poſſeſſion of his ſituation ſoon after the Prince quitted M——: and having originally taken up all the ſhreds and patches of ſelf-importance left there by his predeceſſor, he found it impoſſible to lay them down in that degree the haughty and repulſive manners of Kruitzner demanded: him, therefore, he ſoon moſt cordially hated: nor did the pleaſure he really found in ſeeing Joſephine indemnify him for the mortification his pride received in the ſociety of her huſband;

band: he, consequently, discontinued his visits, or paid them very rarely, and at hours when he believed he should not encounter the latter;—turning over all exercise of ingenuity that respected him to Idenstein, whose subtle and pliant manners eminently fitted him for the task.

Kruitzner, though of a more complex character than his wife, was yet, however, of a more vulnerable one. Neither humiliation nor adversity had succeeded in eradicating from his mind certain proud and turbulent feelings, which, though by necessity rendered passive for the moment, were ready instruments in the hands of those around him to effect any purpose of craft with. Nothing but a profound conviction of the danger and hopelessness of his situation rendered him impenetrable; and it was easy to discern that there were springs in his soul by which he might still

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be governed. It had not been the lot of thoſe who ſought, yet to diſcover them however; and it was even plain that, if they ever did ſo, it would be more the work of their fortune than of their talents: yet little conciliating, or conciliatory, as were the general habits of his temper, they were not always equally intractable: for, to the forlorn and deſponding heart, however cautiouſly it may be guarded, there will ſtill be moments in which the voice of flattery ſounds like that of friendſhip. Idenſtein, who had addreſs enough to perceive this, was at infinite pains to improve thoſe moments; and he failed not, whenever they preſented themſelves, to pour forth ſuch general and deſultory effuſions of philanthropy as he ſuppoſed calculated to make a deep impreſſion on the mind of his hearer: that he did make, however, ſeemed far from anſwering the purpoſe deſigned by it. Kruitzner was,

indeed,

indeed, frequently roufed to momentary attention: fomething like hope would, on thofe occafions, kindle in his eye; but a ftill ftronger feeling feemed almoft immediately to quench it. He would gaze and liften with the intentnefs of a man who is defirous to receive as a truth what his mind, neverthelefs, rejects; till, both the powers of hearing and fight being at length abforbed in fome remote idea, he would ftart from his feat, rufh into the garden, and remain there till the departure of his gueft.

Idenftein had fagacity enough to conclude, that he who flies from the danger of betraying himfelf is more than half way in the net; and after one of thefe broken ftarts, he one day ventured to follow him. Kruitzner was ftanding on a fmall eminence that commanded the diftant mountains, and looking earneftly towards

a par-

a particular ſpot. The ſnow, which had fallen ſo late in the ſeaſon, had rapidly thawed before the increaſing heat of the ſun; traces of vegetation were obvious throughout the whole country around; and a thouſand ſtreams, ſwelled ſuddenly to petty torrents, and ſeen both in the valley and nearer hills, brightened the proſpect.

"You are fond of this view, I think?" ſaid Idenſtein, who had frequently ſeen him on the ſame ſpot.

"It looks towards Bohemia," replied Kruitzner, motioning that way with his hand:—there was ſomething ſingularly mournful in his tone:—he wore too "a countenance more in ſorrow than in anger."

"True—you—you are going thither?" again rejoined his inquiſitive companion.

"I *was*

"I *was* going thither."

"And why do you not purſue your journey?"

Kruitzner ſtarted.

"Are you not afraid to aſk?" ſaid he, fiercely.—There was ſomething ſo odd in the queſtion, and ſo odd in the manner in which it was put, that Idenſtein felt for a moment not wholly devoid of the ſenſation imputed to him.

"Dare you ſolicit my confidence?" continued Kruitzner, in the ſame tone. Idenſtein, though his nerves had not quite recovered the attack upon them, yet brightened up at the word confidence, and muttered ſomething expreſſive of more than a civil aſſent.

"Take it then, in few words—I am poor!"—The countenance of the inquirer again fell. Of all Kruitzner's concerns, this, in fact, ſeemed to him the only one that did not require to be told; and it was, unqueſtionably, that he leaſt deſired to hear: he ventured, however, to expreſs his regret on the occaſion; and to add, "that he was himſelf preciſely in the ſame predicament."

"I thought ſo!" ſaid Kruitzner, with bitter irony: "I had heard that the acquaintance of a poor man are always diſcreet enough to be poor too."—Idenſtein, who had really ſpoken truth—not, indeed, for its own ſake, but becauſe it happened to dictate the anſwer moſt common and convenient on ſimilar occaſions, felt rebuked. During the ſhort pauſe that ſucceeded, he had, however, time to recover his preſence of mind, and to perceive all the

the difference of ſituation between the man who avows his poverty, and he who only ſuffers it to be gueſſed. He believed he ſaw himſelf touching a critical moment, from which much would be gained or loſt to the future; and the recollection that he acted under the Intendant gave him courage for what was to follow. He thought, moreover,—and not without reaſon,—that he perceived remote traces of irreſolution in the countenance of Kruitzner.

"Poverty," ſaid he, fixing his eyes, therefore, on his companion, and raiſing his voice with an oratorical emphaſis, "is, like all other evils, merely comparative! I may conſider myſelf as poor, yet be in a condition to ſhow my regard by aſſiſting another.—A ſmall ſum"—Kruitzner ſuddenly changed colour, and the violent palpitation of his heart was diſtinctly viſible.

" A *very ſmall* ſum," continued Idenſtein, " I think I could command."

" Let it but enable me to accompliſh my journey," ſaid Kruitzner. — He pauſed, and his voice was ſmothered.

" Whither would you go !—and who is the perſon I am thus to oblige ? "— Kruitzner heſitated ; an indiſtinct apprehenſion croſt his mind ; and the groſſneſs of the man who could thus abruptly queſtion him preſented itſelf in glaring colours : but ſad neceſſity, and newly awakened hope, ſtruggled in his breaſt, with a force calculated to ſilence every oppoſing ſentiment.

" Wiſh not, my kind friend !" ſaid he, at length, after a ſilent conflict, and in a ſubdued tone, " to know what it would be

painful for me to tell, and of no avail to you to hear.—If you dare truſt me, accept my promiſe that you will neither truſt the powerleſs nor the ungrateful.—I have no other ſecurity to give!"—That he had proffered was by no means in Idenſtein's way to receive; but ſhort as his progreſs towards confidence had been in compariſon with his expectations, yet as he found he was not likely then to derive further advantage from the converſation, he was content to accede to the terms propoſed—having previouſly ſucceeded, however, in explaining his offer down to ſo *very* ſmall a ſum, as nearly diſpelled his own fears, and completely annihilated the momentary gleam of hope he had kindled in the boſom of his companion.

Inconſiderable as was the ſum Kruitzner thus obtained, and inadequate towards the purpoſe he ſo earneſtly deſired to accom-

pliſh, it was yet ſuch as the cruelty of his fate utterly forbade him to reject. Since his reſidence at M——, he had known privation and poverty in a degree which, far from having felt, he had never before even witneſſed: famine itſelf now approached: and as he had not ſuppoſed it poſſible that the cold hearts of thoſe around would induce them to lend any ſuccour to a man who dared not ſufficiently ſolve the enigma of his own life to proffer a hope of payment, the deſperation of his fate preſt ſo forcibly upon him, that the interference of Idenſtein ſeemed little leſs than a miracle. As the fervour of this impreſſion, however, wore off, his knowledge of mankind taught him to look in that for the cauſe. Idenſtein quickly perceived that he was now, in turn, become a ſubject of much anxious obſervation to his new friend; who, for ſeveral days after, never ſaw him without ſtriving to find in

his looks and demeanour traces of ſome ſiniſter deſign. In this, however, the penetration of Kruitzner was foiled. Idenſtein had naturally a kind of pert frivolity, that wore the appearance of artleſſneſs; he was, beſides, too much on his guard to allow any motive to be diſcernible for his actions, ſave that he announced; and Kruitzner was at length induced, or, perhaps, was willing to believe, that he had really excited a ſentiment of disintereſted kindneſs in the boſom of a man, ſo utterly diſtinct from himſelf. This conviction taught him a little to unbend. He did it, as he believed, with circumſpection; but it was not in the impetuous character of Kruitzner to reaſon accurately, or to guard himſelf at all points. His real neceſſities, his ſanguine diſpoſition, the dangerous habit of relying on his fate, ſoon diveſted him of his caution; and though he ſtill preſerved an inviolable ſilence with regard to paſt events, he

omitted to direct his penetration to the future.

Idenſtein was careful not to throw his new acquaintance off his guard. He had now changed his battery; and, perceiving he could not allure to confidence, waited the occaſion for extorting it. He had no doubt he ſhould ſucceed; and, therefore, took pleaſure in the purſuit: for it was among the ſilly foibles of his own character, to ſport, as he believed, with thoſe around him; to dupe them, while they were arrogating ſuperior prudence; and to enjoy his triumph. It was a character that coſt him dear in the end; and, even in its progreſs, often rendered him a contemptible and unrewarded puppet in the hands of others. In this inſtance, however, he was only one out of three, neither of whom ſuſpected the length or importance of the clue they were unravelling. The

ingenuity of Idenſtein, aided by his apparent inſignificance, was not, however, unſucceſsful. The victim plunged deeper and deeper into the ſnare: and, ſo well did his crafty adverſary underſtand how to tempt his wants by the diſplay and loan of petty ſums, that the unfortunate Kruitzner at length ſtarted as from a dream; and, in finding himſelf a debtor, became ſuddenly ſenſible to a new and undefined miſery, of which, amid all his calamities, he had hitherto been ignorant. Diſſimulation or fear were alike uncongenial to his nature; but he perceived the abſolute neceſſity of practiſing the former, and he ſtrove to regulate his conduct by that conviction. Idenſtein was not, however, deceived: what followed between them became, therefore, a conteſt of cunning, in which the latter had all the advantage. It was in his choice, at any time, to rouſe the proud ſpirit of Kruitzner to a point of defiance that

that ſhould put him within his power, and it was not ſeldom that he touched upon the experiment. He was not wholly without a perſonal fear, however, that taught him to forbear in time: while Kruitzner, on his ſide, ſtrove no leſs ſeduloufly to avoid a criſis ſo dangerous; and ſecretly cheriſhed the only hope he had now for a long period been able to entertain—that of accumulating, by means of this forbearance, a ſmall hoard that ſhould ſupply the neceſſities of his wife and child, while he himſelf undertook the deſperate project of purſuing his journey to Bohemia on foot. How great would have been his ſurpriſe to have known that this ſcheme was perhaps the only one which all parties, could they have penetrated it, would have favoured! Yet ſuch, as far as the junto at M—— was concerned, was undoubtedly the caſe.

By

By comparing the inquiries that had reached them with their own obſervations, this ſagacious circle had, at length, ſatisfied themſelves that Kruitzner and his wife were in reality above the condition they avowed; and buſy imagination had eked out their ſmall ſhare of diſcernment, with a concluſion that one or the other ſprang from a family of rank, and was become liable, by a diſgraceful connexion, to its reſentment. Had Madame Weilburg been conſulted, ſhe would at once have pronounced the tranſgreſſor upon his hereditary honours to be Kruitzner; in whoſe perſon, though faded, there were yet ſufficient traces of dignity and grace to arreſt female attention: but the jury on this occaſion were men; and they, with one voice, pronounced Joſephine to be unqueſtionably the culprit. Enlightened partly by their own ſuggeſtions, and partly by her eyes, they ſaw beauty, grandeur, and all, in ſhort,

that

that was really to be feen in her—except virtue: and, as fhe was not *their* relation, they were inclined to think that a non-effential in her character. In fact, poor Jofephine, though very unconfcious of the obligation, certainly owed fomething to their fufpicion of her wanting it: for though each would individually have had little reluctance to confign Kruitzner to hard diet and a dungeon, there was not one of them could, without fcruple, determine on giving up his wife. Of thefe fentiments the Intendant was the leader. Her perfonal charms, more than any intereft created by her fituation, had firft induced him to ftep forth her protector; and this circumftance was fo far fortunate, as it fhielded her, on every occafion, from the wanton infolence of Idenftein, who attributed views to his employer more decided than the indolence and coldnefs of his nature really prompted him to purfue.

The

The project Kruitzner had continued to meditate, he, at length, confided to his wife. Thofe only who had known the previous events of her life could tell the heart-ficknefs it was calculated to excite. Yet fuch was the peculiarity of their fate, that remonftrance would have been cruelty. To be able together to withdraw privately from M—— feemed little fhort of an impoffibility: that fhe and her child fhould purfue the journey on foot was wholly fuch. There was not the remoteft hope that Idenftein, or indeed any human being, would affift them in undertaking it openly:—fo far the contrary, that both were fenfible myftery and fufpicion had attached itfelf too much to their fate to allow the circle in which they lived voluntarily to lofe fight of them. Yet the importance of the journey was no lefs felt by Jofephine than her hufband. She was well convinced that he had never loved

any human being as he loved her; nothing, therefore, but the extremeſt deſpair could have induced him to think of quitting her; nor, on her ſide, was there a conſideration on earth, ſave that before her, which could make her conſent to their ſeparation. Yet, in addition to the exquiſite ſuffering attending ſuch an event, ſhe felt ſhe had another trial to encounter, which the habits of Kruitzner's mind did not even lead him to ſuſpect: in a word, that it would require an almoſt invincible fortitude to remain in the houſe they now inhabited with no other companion than Marcellin. Superſtition had, nevertheleſs, little or no ſhare in her repugnance. The report of Madame Weilburg, who was never weary of talking about her late "dear and beautiful Counteſs," had ſufficiently perſuaded her that the ſtory related of the latter was, if not wholly ill-founded, at leaſt falſe in its cataſtrophe.

She

She had, in fact, gathered enough to be assured that the Countess was still in existence; nor were the opinions and character of Josephine, even at the worst, such as inclined her to tremble at the dead. Had they been so, the interior of the house, marked by a depressing and faded magnificence, distributed into intricate offices, once crowded with domestics, now dark, still, and lonely, would have been sufficient to have appalled her. It was in itself a body without a soul—a region whence every thing vital appeared strangely to have fled. But the fears of Josephine were of a nearer and less chimerical nature, and originated not in the house itself, but its situation, which was at the extremest verge of a ruinous and half-unpeopled suburb. A spacious garden extended behind from the Prince's grounds to the high-road, surrounded by a wall extremely dilapidated, and so low in many places as almost to

invite intruders; while the neglected ſtate in which the whole had long been ſuffered to remain gave it an appearance particularly rude and ſolitary. That wing of the houſe which was neareſt to the town adjoined to a manſion that had formerly been poſſeſſed by the retinue of the Prince; it was now uninhabited, and formed a gloomy barrier between the palace and the habitation of Kruitzner. No ſound, therefore, that iſſued from the latter could be heard by any human ear; nor was it poſſible that any protector ſhould be ſummoned thither: yet was the houſe every where ſo ſlightly barred, either becauſe the narrow circle of the town ſecured its neighbourhood from depredation, or that the numerous train of the Counteſs rendered precaution unneceſſary, that any night wanderer might without difficulty enter it.

Kruitzner had himſelf aſſented to this obſervation, when made by his wife during the early days of their abode there. But miſery is an excluſive feeling, and leaves no room for meaner and ſubordinate ones; the circumſtance had therefore faded from his mind, as altogether immaterial: nor, while encloſing Joſephine and his child in the ſame apartment with himſelf, did he believe he had any thing to apprehend, or to loſe. Beyond that apartment and the adjoining ſaloon, of which they had alſo taken poſſeſſion, a long range of rooms extended—ſpacious, and chiefly diſmantled. Marcellin, to whom the general appearance of the houſe was not very inviting, had at firſt found ſome difficulty to reconcile himſelf to ſo cheerleſs a reſidence. Curioſity, however, led him ſoon to explore it: nor did he fail to return on theſe occaſions with ſtrange tales to his mother, either of noiſes that were in fact cauſed by ſome remaining

articles of furniture accidentally diſplaced by himſelf, or dungeons which proved, upon examination, to be nothing but cellars and receſſes. His parents ſometimes ſmiled at, and ſometimes chid him. Joſephine, in particular, who had often occaſion to prove the fallacy of his fears, had at length ceaſed to heed them; and, as the boy, though not without the capricious cowardice of his age, was, on the whole, of an enterpriſing character, he had ceaſed to heed them alſo.

If, under theſe circumſtances of real or imaginary danger, terror at any moment aſſailed Joſephine herſelf, the conſciouſneſs of their poverty forbade her to cheriſh it. Even at the worſt, Kruitzner was ever near her—active, intrepid, and manly: but of his protection ſhe was now on the point of being deprived; and, however ſmall the temptation her ſituation offered, either to plunder,

plunder, or offence of any kind, it is ſtill the lot of woman to fear the evils of wantonneſs and levity—evils, which the very certainty that ſhe muſt fear, and, whatever her vigour of mind, may be unable to repel, often tempts the wicked or the thoughtleſs to inflict! Joſephine juſtly diſtruſted her own fortitude when the voice of Kruitzner ſhould be no longer near to encourage, or his arm to ſhield her; when the very apprehenſion of the ſufferings he was encountering might unſtring her nerves; or the poſſibility of his eternal abſence overwhelm her heart with deſpondency. Yet the trial, fearful as it appeared, ſhe believed muſt be encountered; and, what was indiſpenſable, ſhe would have deſpiſed herſelf had ſhe wholly ſhrunk from. Vigorouſly collecting, therefore, the ſtronger powers of her mind, ſhe reſolved ſilently to abide the iſſue, whatever it might prove, with reſolution.

The frame, however, is not always equal

to ſuſtaining the ſtruggles of the heart. A juſt mode of thinking, and a happy temperament, had done much throughout life for Joſephine; but they could not do every thing; and, deſpite of her efforts, her cheek announced to Kruitzner that all was not well within her boſom. His own feelings interpreted hers. Days of painful irreſolution ſucceeded on both ſides, during which their deep abſtraction, and the heavy rains which continued inceſſantly to fall, rendered them inſenſible to the total ſolitude in which they had been permitted to live. Marcellin was not ſo inattentive. He was extremely tired of the wet weather, which kept him within the houſe, and very much ſurpriſed and angry that nobody came to enliven it. The firſt gleam of ſunſhine was a moment of tranſport to him: he ſkipt twenty times in a quarter of an hour to the door, and, at laſt, bethought himſelf of requeſting permiſſion to pay a ſhort viſit to Madame Weilburg, whoſe cloſet, he was

ſecretly

ſecretly not without hopes, ſtill contained ſome of thoſe good things he had been accuſtomed to find there. Marcellin, however, like moſt of his age, forgot his promiſe of returning as ſoon as he was out of ſight. He was right in ſuſpecting the cakes and ſweetmeats were not exhauſted. He got more than his portion, and ſaw beſides ſuch a number of entertaining ſights, as put home entirely out of his head. His ſtay, indeed, ſo far exceeded his uſual limits, that his parents began to be alarmed. Joſephine was already anxiouſly near the door, and her huſband was preparing to ſeek the little ſtray, when he ſuddenly jumpt in, wild with ſpirits and indulgence. ——"Weilburg and his wife were dreſt *ſo* fine!—the Intendant was *ſo* buſy!—Mr. Idenſtein too was there! the Prince's own coach was going out!—and if his parents would but look out of the window, they would ſee it bring home the ſtranger to

the palace!" While Kruitzner and Josephine smiled at this prattle, which was blended with a thousand gay and infantine caresses, the innocent child wound it up, by pronouncing, in the name of *the stranger*, that of the being on earth most hostile to the safety and repose of his father.

Josephine, who saw the change in her husband's countenance, had hardly time to silence the transports of the boy, and hurry him, with her, into another room, when Idenstein entered—adorned, indeed, as had been described, in holiday foppery, and with a repetition of the same hateful intelligence. He addressed himself familiarly to Madame Kruitzner as she past him, and coldly to her husband. They had differed when they last met, and Idenstein apologised, with an air of conceited importance, for an absence which he secretly knew to be acceptable. Kruitzner, whose mind was at

that

that moment a chaos of perturbation and ſurpriſe, was little diſpoſed to conſider their relative ſituations, or how far worſe his own had inſenſibly become ſince he entered M——: impoveriſhed, indeed—but no man's ſlave—for he was then no man's debtor!—perſonal inſult or degradation, in any poſſible ſhape, he had never yet known: and, if the late tranſactions with Idenſtein had ſometimes inſpired a tranſient and painful feeling that reſembled the latter, he had baniſhed it from his boſom, as one who believes death itſelf to be preferable. With ſuch habits and ſentiments, rouſed as they now were by the moſt poignant re-collections, the frivolous being before him became almoſt as completely annihilated to his eyes as to his heart. Idenſtein, poſ-ſeſſed with his own ſelf-importance, did not eaſily diſcover this: but when he did, he well knew how to harrow up the proud ſpirit that could teach it him, by an

abrupt and infolent demand, which it was impoffible to fatisfy.

Kruitzner, forced thus hatefully back upon the mifery of the prefent, again fhrunk into himfelf, with an indignant paufe, and queftioned his foul upon all the poffibilities of the future. He was now every way taken in the toils! A few hours alone, probably, intervened between him and the formidable enemy he had hitherto fuccefsfully avoided. That he could no longer do fo, he had every reafon to fufpect:—but, at the very beft, the fituation in which he was involved with Idenftein (the barrier of oftenfible kindnefs once broken between them) expofed him to humiliations which he found it impoffible to endure.—To make good his long-intended departure on that very night feemed the only method of efcaping them; and dangerous, therefore, as the attempt might prove, both to himfelf and Jofephine,

Joſephine, there was no longer any alternative but to hazard it. This reſolution made, the tempeſt of his ſoul gradually ſubſided: a kind of deſperate ſtillneſs ſeemed to lock up his faculties.—He half-ſmoothed his brow; diſmiſſed, though with ſome difficulty, his troubleſome companion; and, cloſing the doors even againſt his family, ſat down, in ſolitude and gloom, to meditate throughout the evening on the future fate of that wife and child whom he was thus driven by cruel neceſſity to abandon, and to calculate by what further ſuffering he was himſelf yet to expiate the wanton follies of the paſt.—Such was, now, the forlorn and hopeleſs ſituation of a man, who might, at one time, have ſaid, with Anthony,

——— "I was ſo great—ſo happy—ſo belov'd—
"Fate could not ruin me;—till I took pains,
"And work'd againſt my fortune:—chid her from me,
"And turn'd her looſe:—yet ſtill ſhe came again.
"My careleſs days, and my luxurious nights,
"At length have wearied her!"———

He

He who had announced himſelf at M—— ſimply as Frederick Kruitzner was by birth a Bohemian, and of the firſt claſs of nobility. Under the obſcure name he now bore, he had buried that tranſmitted to him through a long line of illuſtrious anceſtors, and which his father had hoped to ſee deſcend untarniſhed in the perſon of his ſon. Thoſe hopes had long ſince vaniſhed: and, before the period at which Kruitzner arrived at M——, Count Siegendorf had ceaſed to know whether or not he had a ſon in exiſtence.

The Count himſelf, though his character was in the end not wholly free from a certain degree of auſterity grafted upon it by afflicting circumſtances, was naturally noble, generous, and humane. He was not without the pride of rank; but it acted only in a certain ſphere. His moderation rendered him dear to his inferiors, in an age

when ſubordination was vaſſalage, and every lord a petty deſpot. He was not young when he became a father, and he looked with the peculiar fondneſs of one who had hardly hoped to be ſuch, on the ſon whom a dying wife trebly endeared to him. In the education of the young man nothing was neglected that was either honourable or uſeful: nor were his talents ſuch as to diſgrace his preceptors. His boyiſh days, if they gave not the promiſe of any eminent vigour of mind, were yet marked by quickneſs of apprehenſion and feeling: and in his rapid progreſs towards manhood, his father believed he ſaw the promiſe of an honourable life. The perſon of the young Count was early formed. The hardy exerciſes to which he was habituated, rendered it vigorous and manly. His features were fine; his voice was commanding; his eye then ſparkled with that flame which now burnt ſo dimly in the ſocket; and he had

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a loftinefs of demeanour which feemed the expreffion of a noble foul.

To this character of perfon, that of his mind, however, did not correfpond. He had rather pride than dignity; and, unhappily, that very failing, which, when it fprings from the confcioufnefs of noble defcent, fometimes becomes the fource of noble actions, had on him a very oppofite effect;—for he was proud, not of his anceftors, but of himfelf. His mind had not vigour enough to trace caufes in their effects. The fplendour, therefore, which the united efforts of education, fortune, rank, and the merits of his progenitors, threw around him, was early miftaken for a perfonal gift—a fort of emanation proceeding from the luftre of his own endowments, and for which, as he believed, he was indebted to Nature, he refolved not to be accountable to man. By feelings like thefe,

thefe, the grand principles of filial duty and affection could not fail to be undermined; and, reafoning progreffively upon this fyftem, every new diftinction which advancing life neceffarily brought with it, to a young man introduced under aufpices fo favourable, nourifhed the fecret fault of his nature. He never paufed to inquire what he could have made himfelf, had he been born in any rank but that he filled. He was diftinguifhed!—he faw it—he felt it—he was perfuaded he fhould ever be fo; and while yet a youth in the houfe of his father—dependent on his paternal affection, and entitled to demand credit of the world merely for what he was to be—he fecretly looked down upon that world as made only for him.

The crimes, however, by which fuch a character might have been ftained were, fortunately, not congenial to his: the love

of pleaſure was the great ſpring of his ſoul —a paſſion little remarkable at a very early period; for at a very early period the circle of his pleaſures could not be other than narrow: nor were boyiſh ſports the objects of ſerious reprehenſion. But when nature and education ſeemed to have done their part, and the important one of man was to commence, how was his father ſhocked and aſtoniſhed to find all that ſhould have led to generous emulation or heroic virtue perverted ſolely to the purpoſes of ſelf-indulgence and voluptuous diſſipation. Willingly, however, did the tender parent allow for the force of temptations youth ſeldom wholly withſtands. He depended on the innate virtues of his ſon to arreſt their progreſs after a certain period, and on his own paternal authority finally to ſubdue them: but the young Count, wanton with proſperity, was little diſpoſed to pauſe in the career of his plea-

ſures;

ſures; and the firſt pointed reprimand of his father conveyed to the latter that moſt afflicting of all pangs—a conviction that his reprimands would for the future be fruitleſs. With trembling uncertainty he ventured to probe deeper into the heart of his ſon, and learnt to ſhrink before the fearful apprehenſion of ſeeing himſelf deſpiſed there. It was now time to aſſert his own claims;—Bohemia was on the point of plunging into a bloody and ruinous war *. The almoſt unanimous rejection of the Auſtrian yoke, offered to the brave and independent a ſphere of action calculated to awaken every nobler energy of the ſoul. The ſtate had not yet, however, ſummoned all its ſupporters: they were called upon by turns individually; and their collective force was reſerved for that period when all hope of a peaceful adjuſtment ſhould be fruſtrated. Count Siegendorf had been among the firſt

* Commonly called the War of Thirty Years.

of thoſe who had armed their vaſſals: he now propoſed to draw them into action, eager to execute a plan he had long meditated of entruſting the command of them to his ſon;—perſuaded that he ſhould, in ſo doing, afford him an occupation gratifying to the turbulence of his youth, and which, as it had been that of his anceſtors, their example would teach him to fill with glory.

The young man was both naturally and habitually intrepid. The avowal of this determination was, therefore, received by him with unfeigned ſatisfaction: and he preſt forward the preparations for his own departure to the camp, with a zeal that once more invigorated the half-extinguiſhed hopes of his father.

Again was he received in a new circle ·ith thoſe flattering teſtimonies of regard

on

on which he was ſo well diſpoſed to rely. Much was expected from him, and much, therefore, in advance was granted to him; but he had not been long with the army before it was diſcovered that glory was in his eyes only another mode of pleaſure, and not exactly of the kind he moſt coveted: he was, beſides, ſelf-opinionated enough ever to believe he might purſue it his own way, and arrogant enough to aſſert his opinions; in the perſuaſion that thoſe who controverted them had, as was indeed ſometimes the caſe, no other advantage over him but that of which he always denied the validity—experience. Under theſe circumſtances he could not be deemed a good ſoldier: and ſuch was the nature of the war, that the cauſe he did not ſerve his influence and example were calculated to injure. Of his perſonal courage, indeed, no doubt was entertained, for he had frequently given proofs of it equally uſeleſs

and raſh: but the diminution of his followers, and the impoveriſhed ſtate of his finances, were particulars, that, as they could not be concealed, ſoon brought home to his father the conviction that he was no longer to be truſted as a leader. Complaints extorted from all ſuperior to him in command daily confirmed this. The Count knew too well his own importance in the ſtate, to believe that any member of it would thus ſpeak of his darling ſon, and the heir of a powerful domain, unleſs impelled by the ſtrongeſt neceſſity. That neceſſity continually became more urgent, and the complaints more importunate. The young man, relying on his perſonal merit, and full of an arrogant ſelf-ſufficiency which left him little diſpoſed to weigh what was paſſing around, except it preſſed upon his pride, was far, mean time, from being aware of the ſtorm that impended: it burſt, therefore, like thunder,

when an authoritative mandate abſolutely took from him all future command or influence over the vaſſals of his family. This mandate he was ſufficiently inclined to diſpute: but he now, for the firſt time, began indiſtinctly to perceive, that, whatever might be his own eſtimation of himſelf, he had not yet made progreſs enough in life to enter the liſts of honour or reſponſibility with his father. A confuſed ſenſe of ſhame, blended with a ſuſpicion of error, paſt rapidly acroſs his mind; but it was a troubleſome ſort of feeling, and he diſmiſſed it as ſuch.

The Count, nevertheleſs, had not thus mortified, or degraded his ſon, without preparing ſomewhat that might ſoften the blow. He had ſecretly ſolicited, and obtained for him, a command in the army, which, though of infinitely leſs importance to the ſtate than that he had loſt, was not

ill ſuited to his rank in life, and ſecured to him the opportunity of recovering that eſtimation his indiſcretions had robbed him of. And now then all again was well in the mind of the youth. He obſerved to his companions that he "had loſt a command given only by the indulgence of a father; — or rather, one which he might conſider as the claim of his birth: the rank he had juſt received, though leſs diſtinguiſhed, was therefore infinitely more honourable. It was beſtowed by his country—it was a proof of his deſert!—a proof that he commanded Fortune, and might henceforth defy her frowns!"—He was nearer the experiment than he expected. The poſt in which he was ſtationed ſtood expoſed in a particular manner to the attacks of the enemy. A furious alarm was given during the night. The duties of his ſituation demanded every exertion of promptitude or valour; but he was buried

in a licentious debauch, and incapable of acting. The poſt was loſt—his honour tarniſhed—the furious reſentment of his countrymen could no longer be controuled: —he was diſmiſſed, by the general voice, from all employment, and baniſhed to his eſtates: the lenity extorted by his rank alone moderating an indignation that might have led to conſequences the moſt fatal.

And now he began to ſuſpect that he did not command fortune. A fierceneſs, dormant in his nature, and ever rouſed when his perſonal feelings were offended, impelled him to ſome deſperate act of vengeance and rebellion. But againſt a nation—a father! a father whoſe almoſt unlimited indulgence could not fail to inſpire him with ſome affection, though it extended not to the weighing parental feelings in balance with his own!—no remedy, no alleviation, preſented itſelf. In the firſt tranſports of

a ſoul, thus rent, as it were, with contending paſſions, he thought not—

> "To throw away the worſer part of it,
> "And live the better with the other half;"

but, fixing at once upon the moſt deſperate reſolution, he collected a quantity of gold and jewels, more than ſufficient for a temporary proviſion, and, attended only by two ſervants, paſſed into Saxony. Alas! he little knew the lingering baniſhment to which he condemned himſelf.

In the firſt tumult and agony occaſioned by this event, Count Siegendorf would willingly have made almoſt any ſacrifice to recal his ſon. Unhappily the greatneſs of his efforts only confirmed in the latter the idea of his own value in ſociety. Placing to the account of general regret and eſtimation that which was, in fact, ſimply the effect of parental fondneſs, he conditioned, he protracted, he wavered, till the reſent-

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ment of the Count was at length roufed to temporary alienation: he took the field himfelf, to atone for the mifconduct of his fon; and the fofter feelings of nature infenfibly died away before the increafing tumult of war. Nor were the pleafures of a gay and luxurious court lefs adverfe to them in the bofom of the young man. He now, for the firft time, felt himfelf wholly uncontrouled. His refources were great, his reception every-where fplendid; his perfonal accomplifhments and lavifh expenditure created him flatterers, if not friends: there was only one fpot in the world where he had ever heard rebuke: to that fpot, therefore, he daily felt an increafing reluctance to return; for he was not wife enough to know that the language of unqualified panegyric is always that of indifference or infincerity.

Time, however, which alike diffipates the

illuſions of the flatterer and the flattered, at length began to ſtrip the ſon of Count Siegendorf of the luſtre in ſociety that title had hitherto given him. He had been received there at firſt as what he really was —a diſſipated, turbulent, and inconſiderate young man: it was now ſuſpected that he would prove a profligate one. His former character excluded him from the ſociety of the rigidly virtuous: the latter ſeemed likely to degrade him to a claſs much below it. The worldly wiſe, the prudent, the proud, alternately began to ſhun him;— theſe, however, did not fill the foremoſt line of the circle in which he lived, and he miſſed them not. An evil he deemed infinitely more ſerious now ſeemed to menace him: his pecuniary reſources were drawing to an end, and he ſaw no mode of repairing them, but by a ſtep at once ſo humiliating to his ſelf-love, and adverſe to his habits of life, that he could not reſolve to take it. His

letters

letters on this ſubject to his father were anſwered by remonſtrances, which, though they ſometimes awakened a tender ſentiment of regret in his heart, were inſupportably painful to his pride. That pride at length found another hope on which to reſt—hoſtile, indeed, to the intereſts of his country, but eminently favourable to himſelf. The Auſtrian power had every appearance of being reſtored throughout Bohemia; an event which, if it took place, would neceſſarily bring with it the diſgrace of thoſe who had diſgraced him. To this hope he now almoſt anxiouſly looked forward: for he had hovered too long in Saxony, the banners of which were already diſplayed in the Imperial cauſe. He even debated with himſelf whether he ſhould not join them, and give to his own return the air of a triumph:—this, however, a ſecret ſenſe of honour and filial duty forbade. He therefore quitted the court

court of the Elector, to carry his diffipation and follies elfewhere; but he did not fail to found his father with refpect to his plans, and to hint to the latter the fecurity he might at leaft derive to himfelf by the apparent fecesfion of his fon from a caufe likely to prove unfortunate.

To projects half difgraceful, and, as he believed, wholly illufive, Count Siegendorf liftened with difdain. Three years had nearly rolled away without producing that reformation his inceffant and repeated indulgences taught him to expect. His fortune had been every way drained; but he had fpent it glorioufly in his own perfon, and unworthily only in that of his fon. He now loudly and vehemently proclaimed his intention of renouncing that fon, if he delayed to return to the paths of honour: —he did delay, till reconciliation was no longer practicable, and the whole weight

of

of his father's indignation was ready to fall upon him. As he had reaſon to know his perſonal liberty would be endangered through the ſteps taken by the latter, who ſecretly moved every foreign ſtate by turns to give up a young man who thus diſgraced his own, he changed his name, and became a wanderer on the northern frontier.

Here he at length painfully learnt that he could no longer command fortune.—Fortune!—alas! he could no longer command even the meaneſt of her votaries. All reſources from his father were finally cut off; his own, eſtimated by his habits of expenſe, were nearly exhauſted: irritability of mind had united with diſſipation to impair his health: a tedious and conſumptive malady preyed upon it; and he, who three years before thought the world was made for him, now began to believe

he was only to occupy that ſmall portion of it allotted to the humbleſt individual. The virtue yet lingering in a heart not wholly hardened or corrupt induced him to reſolve on ſparing his father the final pang. He altered his route, and continued to wander through ſeveral towns of Pomerania and Lower Saxony—frugal, leſs from neceſſity than from abſolute indifference to all that had once ſeduced or allured him. He was at length obliged, by increaſing weakneſs and indiſpoſition, to ſtop at Hamburg.—Though once living only in the tumult of conviviality, he had now no longer ſtrength or ſpirits to ſupport the noiſe of a houſe of public entertainment; hiring, therefore, an apartment in a remote quarter of the town, he ſeriouſly began to deliberate whether he ſhould await death, or advance to meet it. It was at this criſis his guardian angel firſt interfered; the ſpirit

of

of peace and honourable poverty was in the air he breathed, and ſoon communicated its invigorating influence to his heart.

The apartments neareſt thoſe of the Count were inhabited by a man of the name of Michelli; a Florentine by birth, and of a family which, though not of the firſt rank, was yet noble. Born indigent, but with a taſte for the ſciences, Michelli had purſued them with avidity under the greateſt maſter of the age. But as he had not talents or protectors to ſhelter him from that perſecution to which even Galileo finally became a victim, he was obliged, at an early period of life, to quit his country. He carried with him an only daughter; and fixing his reſidence where he believed he might with ſafety purſue his taſtes, ſupplied the narrow circle of their domeſtic wants by his ingenuity in making mathematical inſtruments. The invention of the teleſcope,

telefcope, yet in its infancy, had already excited the wonder and admiration of the learned: and though far from having attained that perfection which the mafterly fkill of future genius was to produce, it had already thrown a new and almoft fupernatural light over the regions of fcience. To give it thofe powers of which he believed it capable was the conftant aim and employment of Michelli. But while anxioufly, and even induftrioufly, tracing the progrefs of knowledge, the philofopher had yet in his moments of leifure an eye for the human countenance, and a heart for human feelings. The young invalid, confequently, did not pafs unnoticed by him. He perceived that he was friendlefs and a ftranger: it was precifely his own fituation in fociety; and, without officioufly obtruding, he fought therefore the occafion of obliging him. To thofe fimple courtefies of life which fpring fpontaneoufly from

the heart, the young man, amidſt all his varied experience, had yet been a ſtranger, and they made therefore a ſingular impreſſion upon his. Inſenſibly he permitted civility to advance into ſlight, but ſocial, intercourſe; and it was on one of theſe occaſions he firſt beheld Joſephine. Though then in the very flower of youth, ſhe was hardly ſo handſome as ſhe afterwards became. She had the Italian dignity of features, a chaſte ſimplicity of manner, together with an underſtanding which it ſeemed the peculiar privilege of her heart to develop, and which, like her perſon, received from that its laſt and moſt touching charm. Her beauty was not overlooked by the Count, but his heart and his paſſions were alike joyleſs and inert. To his palled imagination life was already vapid: he believed he had exhauſted its prime ſources of pleaſure—love, friendſhip, and flattery; yet he did not quit the humble hearth of

Michelli and his daughter without carrying away with him the recollection of faces and voices which, though they ſpoke not abſolutely the language of either, yet ſeemed in ſweet alliance with all.

A ſubject of contemplation, whatever might be its nature, was but too likely to baniſh Sleep from a pillow ſhe had lately ſeldom deigned to viſit: morning, of conſequence, found the young man conſiderably worſe than he had been the preceding evening; and Michelli, who miſſed him at the hour when chance uſually brought them together, ſomewhat ſuddenly entered his chamber. A faint pleaſure kindled on the cheek of the Count, not unmingled however with ſurpriſe, accuſtomed as he had ever been to reſpectful attendance and diſtant homage. His proud and repulſive ſpirit nevertheleſs quickly ſtood abaſhed before a man who, though not wholly un-

acquainted

acquainted with ceremony, ufed it only as the fubftitute for regard, and, in very fimplicity of manners, difmiffed the one as foon as his heart received the other. Michelli felt himfelf indeed interefted alike by the fituation and character of his new acquaintance, in whom he was furprifed to find a degree of intelligence and knowledge not often to be met with even in thofe of maturer years; and, under the impulfe of a firft impreffion, he placed to the credit of nature, and a love of ftudy, what was in fact the refult of a highly-cultivated education.

In the hofpitable and humane attentions of her father Jofephine almoft equally fhared. Her heart had never yet obeyed any impulfe fave that communicated by his; nor did fhe attach either value or importance to thofe little offices of kindnefs fhe was now induced to fhew. The exterior of the Count had not made that im-

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preſſion on her which in his brighter days it probably would have done. She had not ſeen him often, however, before ſhe diſcovered that he was intereſting and amiable: but ſickneſs had robbed him of the graces of his perſon, and corroding reflexions preyed on thoſe of his mind: both gradually began to re-aſſert themſelves.— Contemplated indeed thus,

——" in his calm of Nature,
" With all the gentler virtues brooding on him,"

it would have been hardly poſſible to believe he had been ſo lately the victim of intemperate pleaſure and ungovernable paſſions. Far indeed was Joſephine from ſuſpecting it: the languor and melancholy that preyed upon him ſhe imputed ſolely to affliction or ill health; and ſhe inſenſibly began to look with tender and increaſing ſympathy on the ſufferings of a man who had knowledge to command reſpect, and endowments

endowments that ſeemed to give him a claim to diſtinction.

If the ſociety of the Count was daily more agreeable to Joſephine, to her father it ſoon became nearly indiſpenſable. Michelli correſponded with almoſt every man of ſcience in Europe; but as the narrowneſs of his circumſtances made heavy demands upon his time, his daughter frequently became his amanuenſis. This office was at firſt ſhared, and at length wholly engroſſed, by his young acquaintance. The Count, beſides being ſkilled in all the modern languages, wrote Latin with a fluency and correctneſs far exceeding the abilities of Michelli himſelf; nor were his acquirements contemptible even in thoſe branches of knowledge to which the other more particularly applied. The intercourſe of mind, therefore, became every day cemented between them; preſerving juſt thoſe ſhades

of difference which diſtinguiſh the diſciple from the maſter: and if the modern Alcibiades fell ſhort in talents and graces of the Grecian one, he was at leaſt hardly leſs zealous or docile in his temporary purſuit of wiſdom.

By a ſingular tranſition the ſon of Count Siegendorf was now become a familiar gueſt at the frugal board and fire-ſide of Michelli; and never did days paſs to him ſo delightfully. His underſtanding there daily improved; his temper harmoniſed; the vigour of his perſon returned;—his paſſions, acting for the firſt time under the impulſe of reaſon and virtue, gave juſt energy enough to his manners to mark the features of his mind; and finally—in the contemplation of all—the heart of Joſephine was irrecoverably loſt.

During the ſtate of convaleſcence and

languor

languor that had preceded this period, love was a paſſion that had rather ſtolen by degrees into the boſom of the Count than imperiouſly aſſerted a claim there; but its influence was not the leſs powerful. It now reigned deſpotically and unrivalled. In proportion as the inquietudes of paſſion began to ſeize upon him, he adverted however with more acute anxiety to his own real condition in life. Could he even have reſolved to trample on the moſt ſacred laws of hoſpitality or gratitude for the indulgence of his inclination, he felt that nothing ſhort of ſyſtematical and conſummate hypocriſy could afford him the remoteſt probability of ſucceſs. The love of Joſephine was a generous, tender, and genuine feeling, that looked out in her eyes, and ſpoke in her voice; but "no thought infirm altered her cheek:"—it was a feeling that would have gone through the world with a deſerving object, and encountered

without ſhrinking every ſorrow that world might inflict; but it would have withered before the breath of diſgrace. The Count, without being exactly able to calculate its force, yet felt its nature; and was deeply ſenſible that ſuch a woman muſt be at once reſigned, or honourably ſecured. Yet that his father ſhould conſent to ſuch an ill-aſſorted union was an idea ſo extravagant that he dared not for a moment indulge it: and hers, though he might be tempted by the moderation of his wiſhes to beſtow his daughter on an obſcure and deſerving young man, would moſt unqueſtionably withhold her from the libertine ſon of Count Siegendorf: one whoſe character, when known, would inſpire no confidence, and whoſe age and rank would eaſily enable him to break through any tie not ſanctioned by his family.

A temporary gloom again clouded the features and mind of the Count; the queſ-

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tion had been, indeed, decided in his own bofom, from the moment it became fuch; for it had never yet made a part of his character to contend with any paffion; much lefs did it now, when to yield feemed a virtue: But the manner in which he fhould prefent himfelf to Michelli; and, ah! the point ftill more difficult to decide, that in which he fhould addrefs his daughter, became the conftant fubject of his meditations, and once more banifhed repofe from his pillow. He now watched Jofephine with fuch impaffioned eyes as taught her foul timidly to fhrink into itfelf, and prefent to his anxious imagination and quick feelings an exterior of coldnefs that almoft drove him to diftraction. With a perturbed heart, he at length ventured to found the opinion of Michelli. The philofopher paufed upon it—like a philofopher—or, as the Count rather thought, like the executioner who holds his axe fuf-

pended over the neck of the criminal. He anſwered at length, however, with his accuſtomed ſimplicity and plainneſs: He had conceived highly of the talents of the young man; he had no reaſon to doubt his conduct; of his family he was but little ſolicitous to inquire: for the ſtory of misfortune and emigration preſented to him at the firſt period of their acquaintance, when, as it ſeemed, no intereſted purpoſe could poſſibly be ſerved by it, he never ſuſpected could be other than true: but he was a philoſopher of the later ages; and though he lived chiefly among the ſtars, he was aware that a little terreſtrial proviſion was neceſſary towards the ſupport of a houſehold, however ſimple its plan. To this objection the young man was already prepared with an anſwer. Previous to his explanation with Michelli, he had had the precaution to convert many valuable jewels into money, which he lodged

ſafely

ſafely in reſpectable hands; and though, as the ſon of Count Siegendorf, poverty had long ſtared him in the face, he was not indigent when conſidered only as the future ſon-in-law of Michelli. For the firſt time in his life, too, he now ventured to hint that he had talents—education:—and was rendered modeſt enough by love to be ſurpriſed when he found the plea admitted. Michelli referred him finally to his daughter—and, in ſo doing, ſeemed to the overwrought mind of the Count to ſign his death-warrant. He did not long, however, continue thus diffident; the paſſion that animated him ſoon found or made its opportunity; and Joſephine was too much overwhelmed with the conſciouſneſs of her own feelings to be able to conceal from him that he was beloved beyond his moſt ſanguine expectations.—Michelli ſoon after beſtowed the hand of his daughter on the heir of Count Siegendorf, without knowing

ing that he was raiſing her to a rank the proudeſt in the city would have envied;—that he was conſigning her to a fate the humbleſt might pity.

Time did not render the Count indifferent to the bleſſing thus conferred. It continued to revolve; he became a father, and, in becoming ſo, the recollection of his own was forcibly awakened. For near ſix years all that had paſt on his native ſoil had been to him a blank; he now looked often on Joſephine and his ſon, and anxiouſly wiſhed that he could have transplanted them thither. Alas! the dangerous wiſh was one day to be moſt fatally indulged! the tranquil and philoſophic eaſe in which he lived, nevertheleſs, for a conſiderable period ſubdued it; but it returned with accumulated force, and acquired every day freſh activity from a thouſand remote and incidental feelings, which, however, all tended to one object.

ject. The radical fault of his character was yet far from being extirpated: for whether under the influence of virtuous or illicit passions, whether revelling in the courts of princes, or living in the bosom of frugality and temperance, it was *self*, and self only, that had hitherto guided all his actions; and even at a crisis, when he was willing to believe that filial duty and honour gave rise to his returning sensibility, it was strangely compounded of that pride and self-love the avenging angel had not yet wrung out of his heart.

After long and deep reflexion, he at length ventured to address his father. His letter was couched in mysterious terms, but they were those of contrition. That he had still much to be forgiven was evident; yet such was the confusion of his mind while writing, and his consciousness that in his union with Josephine—prejudice apart—

apart—he had nothing to bluſh for, that his expreſſions ſeemed to announce him proud of ſome unexplained offence, and more diſpoſed to aſſert his rights than to atone for his follies. He had, however, no cauſe to ſuppoſe the letter reached its deſtination. The apprehenſion that his perſonal liberty might be endangered by a diſcovery of the place of his abode induced him to ſend it through a very circuitous channel, and war raged throughout all Germany with too much fury to excite any reaſonable ſurpriſe at its failure. It was long, nevertheleſs, before he perſuaded himſelf it had failed. The interval was filled with impatient expectation—broken ſtarts—deep reveries in which his wife could have no ſhare, and which inſenſibly ſtole him from her arms and her ſociety. She often perceived a ſtrange anxiety and perturbation in his countenance that irreſiſtibly communicated its influence to her heart; but though ſhe

ſhe had no reaſon to doubt his love, there was at thoſe moments a haughty and repulſive fierceneſs in his temper that alike threw ſoothing and expoſtulation at a diſtance.

Where the error of her choice had been Joſephine was at a loſs to diſcover, but ſhe felt ſhe had erred. Gifted as her huſband appeared by nature—graced by education—paſſionately attached to her—ſuitable in years—and accordant in taſtes, ſhe yet became painfully ſenſible that ſhe was mismatched. Long indeed might ſhe have ſought the cauſe; for no feeling in her own boſom had ever yet taught her, that a mind ill at peace with itſelf muſt inevitably ſcatter a blight on the minds of all around.

But Siegendorf was at length no longer maſter of his emotions or his ſecret: of the whole circle of human failings, deceit

was the one leaſt congenial to his nature; and in a furious conflict of ſelf-reproach and impatience, he poured out at once to Michelli and his daughter the extraordinary ſtory in which they were ſo deeply involved. Aſtoniſhment ſeemed for a time to ſuſpend the faculties of both. Michelli, alarmed, flattered, and grieved, hardly knew what was the predominant ſentiment of his mind.. Alas! Joſephine knew too well that of hers. A dream of grandeur and magnificence did, indeed, tranſiently glitter before her eyes, as the phantoms were preſented there; and ſhe perceived, by the detail of her huſband, that all of either which ambition could covet was probably included in her gains: it was for her heart only to calculate its loſſes; and that at once told her the immeaſurable difference between them. She had given her hand to a man gifted, as ſhe believed, by nature beyond his fortunes: ſhe perceived on the contrary

ſhe

ſhe had united herſelf to one who debaſed them. In the ſimplicity of her firſt choice ſhe had been every thing to her huſband:—ſhe was now only one of many objects, and perhaps in the end the leaſt valued. Ill-omened did the exchange appear to her, from content to magnificence: and, for the firſt time in her life, the very ſoftneſs and diffidence of her nature made her unjuſt; for ſhe imputed all the ſingularity of his late conduct to repentance, and all his repentance to her own want of deſert. Judgment and conſciouſneſs, however, ſoon rectified the error of her heart. Without trying the paſt by what might probably be a faſtidious refinement, ſhe ſaw it was her duty to extract happineſs from the future. The conduct of her huſband rendered it evident that ſhe had been paſſionately beloved by him; and when ſhe weighed it with his paſt life and modes of thinking, ſhe ſaw with modeſt wonder how greatly ſhe had been eſteemed. There was no

reaſon

reaſon to ſuſpect that the ſentiments ſhe had once inſpired could poſſibly be extinguiſhed in his boſom, even if they had undergone a temporary ſuſpenſion; they might yet therefore be rendered a ſource of happineſs to both: or rather, ſhe felt that, if they became ſuch to him, her own would be ſufficiently aſcertained.

Thoſe feelings and perplexities which had been very indiſtinctly expreſſed by the Count, preſented themſelves meantime at full to the cool judgment of Michelli. It was clear to him indeed that the letter had probably never reached Prague; but it was not eaſy to determine whether, if it had, the event would have been fortunate. He perceived at once the only evil that had eſcaped the imagination of Joſephine—the poſſibility of her huſband's making his peace at the expenſe of her honour. All that a tender heart could picture to afflict itſelf hers indeed had for the moment preſented;

but nothing that could degrade the object of its fondeſt affections: nor would even the voice of her father have been heard probably on that ſubject without indignation.—Michelli ſpared her the grievous and humiliating idea, by addreſſing himſelf, where he believed he ought, to her huſband. But he had yet known only half the character of the man to whom he ſpoke. That fiery and rebellious ſpirit, which brooked not controul from his own father, revolted to its firſt nature at the remoteſt thought of it in hers. Conceiving at once all the extent of Michelli's ſurmiſes, however cautiouſly they were expreſſed, the Count was not juſt enough to feel that his own deceit had incurred the indignity, and he reſented it with the ſame turbulent diſdain that ſo often marked his conduct. Michelli was juſtly rouſed to anger. They parted on ill terms. The Count retired to his own apartments to deliberate, and his determi-

 nation,

nation, as before, was fatal to his honour.

To abandon Josephine or her child would never probably, in his worst moments, have occurred to him; for he was not a villain, if the man who always first considers himself can be securely deemed otherwise. In this case, however, it was a crime to which he had no temptation; for he fondly loved her; nor was he less attached to his son. Even for Michelli he had the most unqualified esteem: but of the mode of making either of them happy or prosperous his imperious temper directed him to render himself sole judge.—Among various methods of subduing his father's heart, the Count had ever deemed one to be infallible—a personal appeal. It was a project he had long secretly meditated, and almost resolved on; but to which he now believed it impossible that, under the impression Michelli

had

had conceived of his deſigns, he ſhould conſent: nor could he be aſſured that Joſephine herſelf, guided by her father's judgment, would not vehemently oppoſe his departure. —To effect it, therefore, within four-and-twenty hours ſeemed the only eaſy method of effecting it at all. Little preparation was neceſſary, and hardly any thing but ſecreſy indiſpenſable. Night was already far advanced. He ſtole ſoftly to the chamber of his wife, and perceived that care and long watching had at length buried her in a profound ſleep. He kiſſed her, and might have exclaimed with Othello,

> "Oh balmy breath! Almoſt thou doſt perſuade
> "Juſtice to break her ſword!"———

for juſtice, by a ſtrange perverſion of his better reaſon, he believed it, thus at once to puniſh the injurious ſuſpicions of Michelli, and, by the moſt ſummary proceeding, atteſt his own honour. Morning at length ap-

 peared,

peared, and found his resolution fixed. He forgot his first fatal flight from his father; he forgot the instability of his own character; he forgot every thing that ought to have restrained him, and in evil hour he turned his back upon the gates of Hamburg!

The Count had not, however, proceeded many leagues before tenderness and a more correct sense of equity began to struggle in his bosom. He half suspected his own measures of being precipitate: he was at least sure they admitted of misconstruction. He pictured to himself the overwhelming grief of Josephine, and even the silent consternation of her philosophic father.—Though unable to resolve on the humiliation of returning, he stopt at the nearest post town, and from thence wrote to his wife. All that language could convey, either tender or generous, was expressed in his letter.

letter. Moſt earneſtly he conjured her to guard both her health and peace unimpaired till his return. He repreſented his abſence to be ſuch as he really hoped it would prove—beneficial and temporary. He committed their beloved boy to her wiſe and maternal protection, with fatherly fondneſs and unlimited confidence. It was their united claims he ſolemnly proteſted that he was now journeying to ſecure, and his own filial duties which though late, he was about to fulfil. He concluded with drawing a flattering picture of the affluence and felicity a reconciliation with his father would enſure their future lives: nor did he, now that the momentary reſentment he had felt towards Michelli was partly ſubſided, omit to make that honourable mention of him to which, by his virtues and relative ſituation, he was entitled. Such was the letter of the Count! Alas! when language without being inſin-

cere grows thus eloquent, the exquisitely discerning heart too often traces in it only the overflowings of a conscience yet unseared; that thus compromises with itself, and spends the wholesome vigour of the mind in exhausting and deceitful effusions of sensibility!—If such were the feelings of Josephine, obedience, that saddest or most sweet of duties, yet taught her to conceal them. She calmed her brow to Michelli: she took her son with aching fondness to that bosom her husband had deserted; and strove to find in rectitude and hope a balm for evils she saw no rational mode of remedying.

But whatever might be the sincerity of the Count in the tender professions he made his wife,—and in those he *was* sincere,—the reflexions that writing naturally tended to produce had insensibly rendered him less sanguine as to the success of his own projects.

jects. Thoſe reflexions now told him, that from the moment he ſet foot in his native country he could no longer conſider himſelf as a free agent; ſince even if his paſt tranſgreſſions did not render him amenable to that country, of which the criſis when he quitted it made him doubtful, he was at leaſt certain that the limits of parental authority would be enlarged to the uttermoſt by that of the public: and to what, ſhould his father prove inflexible, might not ſuch authority extend?—it might tear him for ever from Joſephine and his ſon; it might violate every tie either ſacred or delightful; and render him of neceſſity the very villain Michelli had more than half ſuſpected he would prove. What plea had he to offer that might obviate theſe probable evils, or ſubdue at once the reſentment of a father whom he had ſo long either neglected or defied?—ſimply the influence of his pre-

ſence, and the weight of his promiſes; and now, for the firſt time, his ſelf-love vaniſhed before the idea of the former, and his ſelf-deluſion before that of the latter. At every pauſe in his journey he looked back with more reſtleſs anxiety on thoſe he had left, and forward to thoſe he was approaching. Pride, honour, love, every thing dear to him, was included in the event; and where the ſtake is ſo mighty, he muſt be a daring adventurer indeed who trembles not to caſt the die!—A circumſtance wholly unlooked for, at once gave a new colour to his fate.

The Count's journey was of neceſſity tedious and indirect, as the horrors of war every where obſtructed or followed him: his route, therefore, included the town to which he had requeſted that the anſwer he had flattered himſelf with receiving from his father, might, under a fictitious name, be

addreſſed; but the channels of correſpondence were at that period ever uncertain, except in great commercial cities: the ſtate of the country rendered them ſtill more ſo; and as near two years had elapſed from the time he had written, his inquiries, hitherto fruitleſs, now ſeemed almoſt irrational: yet that reſtleſsneſs which ſtill attends incertitude induced him to renew them. The poſtmaſter pauſed a few moments; examined a ſmall drawer that appeared full of diſcarded papers, and then, to his aſtoniſhment, produced a letter, the ſuperſcription of which he inſtantly knew to be the writing of his father. Could that father have ſeen the breathleſs impatience with which he tore it open, he would probably have fallen on his neck, and believed he had indeed found his ſon again. The date of the letter was not very far back, and the firſt lines of it expreſſed ſurpriſe at that of his own, which appeared to have been

nearly

nearly loſt, and very long retarded. A tender inference was, however, obviouſly to be drawn from the various precautions that ſeemed to have been taken to preſerve the anſwer from failing: it was written from the camp.

Count Siegendorf paſt over, in gentle, but dignified terms, that part of his ſon's letter on which he could not rely: but though he had, unhappily, little confidence in his profeſſions, he ſpoke with ſenſibility of the returning conſciouſneſs of duty and honour which dictated them. He demanded, however, to be informed moſt explicitly of the nature and extent of the offences he was called upon to pardon. "The narrative," he obſerved—and the obſervation was not made without an expreſſion of the moſt impaſſioned regret, "now included the events of years; but on his part he was prepared to temper the ſeverity

verity of a judge with the indulgence and patience of a father. As he was not aware of the reafons that had induced his fon to change his name, he highly praifed the delicacy that led him to renounce, rather than continue to difgrace it. He adverted in ftrong though broken ftarts of tendernefs to the hour when that name might refume its firft fplendour; but he peremptorily forbade him ever to appear in his native country till fuch an hour arrived. Finally he touched upon his fon's pecuniary refources, and defired him to name the fpot whither fuch remittances might be made, as his exigencies could not but require."

And now again the heart of the young man beat high with habitual felf-applaufe and congratulation. Plunged as he had juft before been in a gloom almoft approaching to defpondency, with a fenfibility yet aching under the recent lofs of all dear to him,

him, and an imagination prompt to magnify every poſſible evil, he ruſhed at once into the contrary extreme. Far from ſeeing in his father's letter what he juſtly might—a mind ſelf-balanced, and prepared to make, if neceſſary, a deſperate ſacrifice to honour, he dwelt only on the tender paſſages of it; and believed he diſcerned in them a thouſand ſtruggling though half-ſuppreſſed feelings, which his anſwer, for he anſwered it on the ſpot, would, he flattered himſelf, render unconquerable.

The enthuſiam of the moment could not but dictate more of promiſe than detail. He avowed, indeed, the circumſtance of his marriage, and the birth of his ſon; and he was careful to ſatisfy the pride or the prejudices of the Count, by an aſſurance that the family from which Joſephine ſprang was ſuch as did not attach diſgrace to his own. The remainder of

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the letter consisted of a solemn asseveration of his sincerity; of the temperance and simplicity long since established in his modes of life; and of the unshaken fidelity with which he meant to fulfil all his engagements. The tenor of the whole was, indeed, well calculated to raise the hopes and expectations of a fond parent to the most sanguine pitch: it was dated from the spot on which it was written; and he concluded by saying, that he should pursue his journey as far as Cassel, "there to attend the further orders of his father, and to receive testimonies of his kindness in any way he should deem it suitable to offer them."

The event which had thus intoxicated his heart remained to be related to Josephine. Ah why could he not press her to his bosom!—read in her eyes the sweet participation of his hopes, and communi-

cate them by that intuitive and ſympathetic power which leaves language ſo far behind! He was ſenſible that the letter he addreſſed to her, though the honeſt effuſion of his own heart, was not ſuch as could create unmixed pleaſure in hers. The glaring colours with which his imagination painted the future, were calculated imperceptibly to throw into ſhade the retired and humble happineſs of the paſt; and, by a peculiarity with which he had tinged his own fate, he felt that he could not exult in the diſtinction he was to beſtow, without involuntarily taking ſomething from that he had received.

Refinements which are only the effect of capricious ſenſibility do not often produce much real diſquiet. His, was "the perfume and ſuppliance of a moment." Again the awakened conſciouſneſs of youth and proſperity began to beat in every pulſe.

Nature,

Nature, as he purfued his journey, feemed to have changed her afpect to him: the forms of pleafure floated indiftinctly before his eyes; and a tumultuous crowd of long-buried fenfations and habits revived in his bofom. In the fecurity of receiving remittances from his father, he drew out of the hands of the banker at Hamburg that provifion lodged there for his wife and fon. His pride loudly demanded an indemnification for the privations it had long undergone, and unfortunately it foon received one too ample. He had hardly prefented himfelf at Caffel before he was recognized by feveral young men of his own rank and age for the fon of Count Siegendorf; and as it was not doubted, from his appearance and expenditure, that he was licenfed in the paft, all the feductions of diffipation and bad example were held out in the prefent. A memorable period fucceeded! —youth, habit, felf-indulgence, again too fatally

fatally prevailed;—and the husband of Josephine, ten thousand times more criminal in that character than he had ever been before, relapsed into those vices which had already made a wreck of his honour and his peace. Amidst the excesses which now threatened finally to destroy both, he was even indiscreet enough to forget all the importance attached by his father to the renunciation of his name. He did not indeed formally resume it; but he was sufficiently willing that his rank should be acknowledged; and it was too necessary a claim in the circle he mingled with, not to become generally so.

Four months rolled away in excesses which, with his usual self-complacency, he persuaded himself were venial, as he was fully resolved the summons from his father should end them. Whenever that arrived, he solemnly promised his own heart to abjure all

all pleaſure incongruous with his duties—to live only for Joſephine and his family, and to limit his follies for ever. It was ſo long ere any intelligence reached him from Prague, that he almoſt began to doubt ſome ſecond delay, more unexpected than the firſt, had attended his letter. The anſwer to it at length arrived, and his follies were, indeed, for ever limited;—but, unhappily, by no forbearance or virtue of his own. Contrary to his expectation, the packet was addreſſed to him by the name and titles of his family; as though the flaming indignation of his father diſdained all concealment, and was willing to announce itſelf at the firſt glance.

Count Siegendorf, in the moſt pointed terms, and ſuch as beſpoke him well acquainted with all that was paſſing at Caſſel, at once renounced a ſon to whom it was evident no promiſe was ſacred; "who

had flattered his hopes only the more grofsly to betray them; who had fported with the name of his family again to disgrace it; who was alive to no feeling of duty, no principle of honour; and whom time and misfortune, far from reforming, had only taught duplicity." He enjoined him, as he valued his liberty, never again to venture within the limits of Bohemia, much lefs dare to appear in his prefence. He concluded with faying, that, "worthlefs as he feared the fcion might prove of fuch a ftem, he was neverthelefs willing to receive the little Conrad, and fecure for him thofe claims he was born to, under the exprefs condition that his parents fhould fee him no more. That if they acceded to thefe terms, he would remit to his fon an annual provifion; but if otherwife, he difclaimed him for ever."

From the day this letter was received, the

the character and manners of the young Count seemed to undergo a total alteration. He believed himself grossly injured by his father, and he conceived a resentment likely to end but with the life of one of them. His mind, untuned for pleasure, for ever revolted from it: he remained several weeks buried in meditation; at the expiration of that time he departed abruptly from Cassel, and wrote to Josephine to meet him, with Conrad, within a few leagues' distance of Hamburg. The fate he had prepared for himself weighed heavily upon his soul, and seemed at once to have absorbed all its softer feelings: there was not justice enough in that soul to point the accusation where it ought to have fallen; and he regarded the event as unprecedented and intolerable. To remain for life only the son-in-law of Michelli was an idea that even his darkest contemplations had never presented to him; yet

ſuch was now the probable concluſion of his fate. The manner of his father's letter left him without a doubt that he would, if further irritated, execute the reſolution he announced, and, veſted with that power the ſtates would eaſily put into his hand againſt a ſon they did not eſteem, make over the honours of the family to the collateral branch, which centred in Baron Stralenheim; a native of Franconia, and nearly allied on the female ſide to the houſe of Siegendorf. The ſimple, but hateful, medium his father had propoſed, could alone, therefore, ſtand between him and final ruin. But how was Joſephine to encounter a blow every way thus cruel? or how was a huſband to relate to her the fatal conſequence of his own accumulated indiſcretions? It is among the great evils of miſconduct to harden the heart, and it had hardened that of the Count. Yet on this ſide he was not yet invulnerable. Another

ther motive, however, even more urgent than any yet conſidered, impelled his deciſion. Circumſtanced as he now found himſelf, it was not poſſible for him to replace that ſum which, relying on the liberality of his father, he had imprudently laviſhed. Yet that ſum, lately deemed ſo inſignificant, was mighty now in his account of life. For was he to return to Hamburg a poor dependant on the bounty of Michelli? Or could he become a hireling, and give to his wife and child the ſcanty bread of poverty? Miſery—inevitable—intolerable miſery, ſeemed to environ him on every ſide. But there was a point in his character at which it ever repelled the arrow from himſelf, though at the expenſe of all around; even now, in the very criſis of ſelf-condemnation and ſhame, concentrating, as it were, to that point all the harſher and more ſtubborn feelings of his nature, he prepared to meet Joſephine and

 Michelli

Michelli with a firmneſs that ſhould alike exclude expoſtulation or reproach, by ſhowing that his deciſion, whatever it might prove, would be irrevocable, and that he would be reſponſible for his conduct to no being but himſelf.

He had only to ſee Joſephine to be convinced that he might have choſen, if a more upright, yet a no leſs indulgent judge.—She, as well as Conrad, was in deep mourning, and he learnt, with that acute and unexpected pang which ever attends the death of thoſe we believe we have injured, that Michelli was no more. He died as he had lived, in peace with his God and with mankind. Diſmiſſing all reſentment againſt the Count, he left him the ſole goods he had to bequeath—his daughter, his pardon, and his bleſſing. In parting with Joſephine, however, even the gentle and philoſophic habits of his temper

were almoſt inadequate towards ſupporting the firmneſs of either. To her boſom he had long ſince communicated all the pure and noble qualities of his own: he had nothing more to give!—they parted therefore as thoſe who were to meet again, and to know each other by the ſympathetic influence of the virtues and affections.—The Count was not inſenſible to this ſhort and ſimple detail: but it was now no ſeaſon for indulging the ſofter ſenſibilities of life. With Michelli was buried the laſt hope of ſaving Joſephine and her ſon from impending ſeparation: for ſo deſperate had been his own plans, that he had more than once thought of ſilently renouncing both, and, by plunging into a military career, however obſcure, either ſave himſelf from the diſgrace that ſeemed attached to exiſtence, or the guilt of voluntarily ending it.

Again the tender influence of Joſephine was employed in expelling the corroſive reflexions that preyed upon the heart of her huſband. Riſing vigorouſly with the occaſion, ſhe endeavoured to recal both to his imagination and her own thoſe brilliant pictures of the future he had himſelf once preſented to her. They were now, indeed, to be realiſed only in the perſon of their ſon; but would they be therefore leſs valued?—Conrad, removed from their protection, would be but the more dear to their affections! On her part ſhe could reſolve, with matron firmneſs, to reſign him to a fate proſperous beyond what the cruelty of theirs allowed them to hope they could beſtow; and if their own were leſs dazzling, ſhe tenderly reminded her huſband of thoſe days when magnificence formed no part of their plan of happineſs. The Count liſtened in ſilence; he ſtrove to aſſent; he would willingly have concealed

from

from every human being that he could not without reluctance resign, even to his son, that place in society he had in his own person so wantonly thrown away, nor give to his father a blessing of which he was to deprive himself. The mind of Josephine was too acute, however, not to discern the latent rankling principle. But she buried the consciousness deeply in her own bosom, and with it all those afflicting sentiments the character and conduct of Siegendorf could not but create.—Conrad was something more than eight years of age, when he was at length delivered up to the care of his grandfather: the latter was punctual to his engagements; and though the income of the Count was moderate, it was such as supplied every demand, save that of luxury.

The career of dissipation now closed:—and so silent was the progress of life, that

time

time and fate ſeemed ſtationary. Joſephine could ſtill indeed occaſionally beguile the hours of her huſband; but neither time, nor circumſtance, nor love itſelf, ever reſtored to him his former character. He was habitually moroſe and abſtracted; animal ſpirits and youth no longer danced through his veins, and he had no ſtore of pleaſurable ideas that ſhould ſupply their place. Occupied in gloomy meditation, he turned his eyes inceſſantly back to the brilliant horizon of his early life, and murmured at the ſpan to which it was contracted. The birth and growth of another ſon ſomewhat meliorated theſe feelings; but, by a ſtrange perverſeneſs in his nature, the Count never loved Marcellin with the fondneſs he had ſhown for Conrad: while Joſephine, on the contrary, ſeemed anxious to indemnify herſelf for the loſs of one ſon by cheriſhing a double portion of fondneſs for the other.—The ſecret ſtorm of the paſ-

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ſions at length ſlowly ſubſided in the boſom of her huſband; who, fixed in his fate, fallen from his fortunes, ſoured to the preſent good, and only at intervals ſtealing from her eyes that gleam of ſunſhine and of hope they ever communicated, preſented to indifferent obſervers merely a common character and a common lot.

But though the years immediately ſucceeding that gloomy one which ſeemed to fix the fate of the Count paſſed thus apparently in torpor, they were ſecretly marked by various tranſitions of opinion and feeling. As the colours of the paſt became leſs vivid, his mind dwelt with more deep and intenſe contemplation on the proſpect of the future. In the death of his father he ſtill ſaw the probability, the almoſt certainty, of a change in his ſituation that could not but reſtore him to his natural rights, by leaving no other competitor for

them

them than a ſon, whoſe tender age would ill calculate him for a conteſt. Count Siegendorf was far advanced in life, and had never been vigorous: a day, an hour, therefore, might ſettle the great account between them—but days and hours fly not according to the calculations of man!—inſenſibly they ſwelled into years, and brought with them no change. The young Count felt his confidence in the future diminiſh: even the death of a parent, a circumſtance which he dared hardly own to himſelf he deſired, might no longer bring with it the advantage which alone could render it deſirable! Years ſtill continued to revolve, and the event of the future became daily more problematical. At length that proud and rebellious ſpirit which long forbade him to make any farther effort with his father, chiefly, perhaps, becauſe he believed the authority of that father muſt ſoon inevitably terminate, gave way before the pro-

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bability of its devolving to a ſon faſt approaching to manhood. He contemplated with bitter and ceaſeleſs regret the ſtill increaſing interval during which ſome fa vourable moment might doubtleſs have been found to ſoothe an indignation his forbearance had perpetuated, and recal to himſelf feelings now probably centred for ever in Conrad!

It had been among the voluntary engagements of Count Siegendorf, to inform Joſephine and her huſband if their ſon were either ſick or dead.—No ſuch intelligence ever reached them. Conrad was well then! —he was great—perhaps happy!—No tender yearnings recalled the memory of his boyiſh days! his parents were to him as nothing!—he made not any effort to ſee—to hear of them!—they languiſhed in obſcurity, and in a fondneſs that knew no fruition, while he revelled in every thing that

that fortune or fondneſs could beſtow!—If theſe reflexions corroded the heart of the father through a thouſand avenues, they were not excluded even from the tender and generous one of Joſephine. At a criſis when her huſband's peace was at ſtake, ſhe had, indeed, heroically dared to part with her ſon;—but to loſe him for ever brought with it a pang that ſhook her utmoſt fortitude. For the firſt time in her life ſhe envied Count Siegendorf; and, like her huſband, looked with longing and anxious eyes towards that only ſpot whence both were alike excluded.

During the latter years of the Count's reſidence at Hamburg, it was among his additional grievances that the man whoſe name had been held forward to him on an occaſion he could never remember without bitterneſs of ſpirit, had taken up his abode in that neighbourhood. Baron Stra-

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lenheim he had reaſon to know was the perſon formerly deputed by his father to watch his actions, and reſtrain them, if poſſible, by the hand of authority. Years had paſſed ſince that time, and there was no reaſon to ſuppoſe that Stralenheim had any longer any influence over his fate. But the reſentment and diſdain once conceived againſt the latter ever engendered a deep diſtruſt in the mind of the Count. No two beings on earth could ſeem however more diſtinct from each other than they now appeared to be. The Count had never ſince the period of his marriage, and even ſome months preceding it, borne his own name—the fatal period excepted he had paſſed ſo indiſcreetly at Caſſel, where, though he claimed it not, it was generally given him. He was not ſure that the Baron knew his aſſumed one; and certainly the reſidence of the latter at Hamburg ſeemed to have no reference to his: yet it

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was ſingular that he ſhould reſide there! the circumſtance of his doing ſo, for he was a man of ſtately and reſerved habits, came to the Count's ear by what neverthe-leſs appeared a mere accident.

In the houſehold of the Baron there was an Italian of the name of Giulio; a Pied-monteſe, who had reſided many years at Hamburg during the life of Michelli; and though in an obſcure ſituation, and not preciſely of the ſame country with the latter, yet, being a man of ingenuity, was very well known to him. Joſephine, to whom every one was in ſome degree dear that recalled the memory of her father, never failed to notice Giulio when he fell in her way; and when that did not hap-pen, a ſentiment of grateful reſpect in-duced him ſometimes to inquire after her. On this man the Count had fixed a ſuſpi-cious eye; but he ſaw him very rarely,

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and nothing appeared in his conduct to juſtify the idea of his being a ſpy.

The ſtrange and inexplicable feeling which ſuperſtition terms preſentiment was nevertheleſs ſingularly allied to reality in the caſe of the Count. The reſidence of Baron Stralenheim had in fact that very reference to his which he ſuſpected; and could he indeed have looked into the future, he would have known the latter to be of all exiſting beings the one moſt portentous to his future life! Of this they were alike ignorant: nor was it poſſible either ſhould yet ſuſpect the dark ſhadow they were mutually to caſt over each other's fate! Giulio was nevertheleſs no inſtrument in the hands of the Baron, who was even unſuſpicious of the opportunity that offered of making him ſuch. Stralenheim was a man of a phlegmatic character, and a narrow mind. He had ſpent one half of

his life in the ſervice, becauſe fortune had placed him there; but he had no taſte for glory; and he had retired to ſpend the remainder in the country, with as little taſte for that. He loved, however, the petty dignity attached to his family and alliances; and ſurveyed with much ſatisfaction a Gothic château ſituated in a marſh, and flanked with avenues of worm-eaten timber, becauſe its precincts were his own.

From this dream of ſolitary and inſignificant grandeur he had been ſuddenly waked ſome years before by a remote expectation of the inheritance of Siegendorf: the magnitude of the object was ſuch as might have rouſed a more torpid mind; and it accorded too well with the propenſities of his, not to call forth all his attention. His hopes had, however, been fruſtrated before they could reaſonably be called ſuch. The Count, ever indulgently

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leading towards his ſon, had almoſt inſtantaneouſly repented the meaſures dictated by temporary reſentment, and had therefore withdrawn, as he believed, from the hands of Stralenheim all power of injuring him. But Stralenheim was a man of cold and deliberate purpoſe: not eaſily kindled to purſuit, but tenacious of his object; and as he perceived the Count to be wholly devoid of ſuſpicion reſpecting him, he had addreſs enough craftily to retain the power, though he could not calculate exactly when or how he ſhould uſe it. The adoption of Conrad had appeared a far more fatal blow to his hopes than any reconciliation with Conrad's father: yet even this did not wholly extinguiſh them; for he was of a temperament that enabled them to be permanent, without being active. Impoſing on himſelf, therefore, juſt as much reſtraint as ſhould keep him within the ſphere of the Count, whoſe aſſumed name

was the very one that expoſed him to danger, Stralenheim waited patiently the ſlow aid of time and occaſion.—Such was the enemy that hung over the head of the unhappy Siegendorf! an avenging inſtrument, as it ſeemed, in the hand of Heaven, ready forcibly to precipitate the ſcale of miſery downwards, whenever error or misfortune ſhould drop their weight into the balance.—An event that had nothing to do with the calculations of either party ſeemed preciſely at this period on the point of overturning thoſe of both.

Twelve years had rolled away ſince the departure of Conrad. The income of the Count had been regularly paid in that interval; and as he relied on its increaſe whenever his father died, either by the acceſſion of himſelf or his ſon, the caution of Joſephine had never been able to prevent his expending it even improvidently.

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With a feeling that partook at once of incredulity and amazement, he learnt that it was no longer to be remitted to him. His father then was dead!—Ah no!—the prohibition was ſigned by his hand. The eyes of the diſtracted ſon peruſed the billet, and his memory too well authenticated the writing. That cruel fever which afterwards incorporated itſelf with his conſtitution ſeized at once upon his pulſe—his brain—his heart! Long and painful was the ſtruggle between life and death—but the vigour of conſtitution prevailed: he at length recovered, and found himſelf almoſt a beggar! An act of cruelty ſo extravagant as that of impoveriſhing an only ſon, could not, however, be without a motive. No exceſſes had now diſgraced the tenor of his life, no arrogant aſſumption of name that of his family. At a criſis when the bitterneſs of deſpair had nearly overwhelmed Joſephine, theſe conſiderations had ne-

vertheleſs inſpired her with fortitude enough to take the only ſtep that could avert it. Blending the dignity of her natural character with the ſenſibility of a wife and a mother, ſhe ventured, in language rendered exquiſitely touching by the occaſion, to addreſs that reſpected father-in-law whom ſhe had yet never ſeen. She wrote alſo to her ſon.

The ſullen deſpondency which firſt ſeized the Count on his recovery, yet yielded to a feeble impreſſion of hope on learning the meaſure purſued by his wife. He conſented to live; but his imagination bounded the term of life, though he refuſed it not as a temporary gift. As yet, indeed, he believed it to be an uncertain one from the mere languor and feebleneſs which ſucceeded indiſpoſition. He was dozing one evening on a ſmall couch Joſephine had drawn for him to the fireſide, when,

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roufed by an indiftinct murmur of voices, he raifed his eyes, and perceived fhe was talking with a man in the ante-room. A fecond glance fhowed him it was Giulio. Agitated by that affociation of ideas which had long haunted him with refpect to the latter, he inquired his bufinefs: the man was abafhed; the languid air of Jofephine, fo different from that which was habitual to her, had already infpired in him an embarrafsment common to timid and uncourtly minds, not accuftomed to fet the feelings of others at defiance: he was confcious of intrufion, and, in a voice of apology, explained his errand: it was fimply to inform Jofephine that he was on the point of returning to Italy; to inquire if fhe had any thing that demanded his fervice there; and modeftly to requeft, as a token of her regard, a few mathematical inftruments of little value, that had been made by Michelli. Again the Count was

ſtruck as with ſome inexplicable relation to his own fate in ſo ſudden and unexpected a departure.

"For what reaſon," he aſked, "did Giulio, at that criſis, quit Hamburg?"

"Baron Stralenheim had diſmiſſed his houſehold, and was about to undertake a long journey."—Joſephine found the ſelf-poſſeſſion her huſband wanted, and inquired, though not without ſome emotion —"Whither?"

"He was not quite certain; he believed it was to Prague; he was at leaſt ſure it was as far as Bohemia."—The ſilence that followed this reply was unnoticed by Giulio, who ſaw in the queſtions put to him nothing but a condeſcending civility that ſtrove to efface the coldneſs of his firſt reception; it was his part, he conceived, to ſhow

ſhow that he felt it ſo, by prolonging the converſation.

"Baron Stralenheim," he continued, "is neither very communicative nor very generous. Were he the latter, he would probably not diſmiſs his ſuite: for he is going, I am told, to take poſſeſſion of the rich inheritance of Count Siegendorf."

"Siegendorf is alive!" exclaimed the agitated Count, in a voice he found it impoſſible to controul.

"At leaſt—his grandſon," added Joſephine; and ſhe too faltered, ſtruck with a thouſand painful recollections; and with the cruel poſſibility of even that being a doubt.

"The Count himſelf unqueſtionably is dead," replied Giulio: "the Baron ſeems

to

to think little of the claims of his grandſon, whoſe legitimacy he ſays is dubious; the inheritance is at leaſt worth a ſtruggle —and he is not, therefore, the man to part with it."

To the heart and imagination of the Count and his wife theſe few words ſummed up the hiſtory of years; perhaps of all that remained to them in exiſtence: they touched at length, then, the final point at which they were to ſtand or fall; and how did it find them provided for the conteſt?—ſick —miſerable—impoveriſhed!—blighted, as it appeared, by a father's dying curſe— ſince his laſt cruel prohibition was hardly leſs; and uncheriſhed by that only being on whom they could reſt a hope. For what was become of Conrad? why did he not now ſeek them? was he the victim of ſome ſecret machination on the part of Stralenheim? or was he revelling in the

inheritance of his father, and unconſcious of the ſtorm that impended over himſelf? —Whatever might be his fate, his character, or his ſentiments, it was at leaſt evident that his parents were as neceſſary to his future welfare as he could be to theirs; ſince what beſides their perſonal appearance could legitimate his birth againſt the claims of a crafty and powerful competitor! One only doubt invalidated the importance of theſe mighty queſtions; and that doubt was quickly removed, for a very ſhort inquiry authenticated to the Count the intelligence of his father's death—Giulio having received all his information on the ſubject from Stralenheim's ſecretary, who had himſelf read the letter from Prague that announced it.

In the tumult of contending hopes, fears, and ſorrow, that naturally took poſſeſſion of the boſoms of Joſephine and her huſband

band at a crisis thus important, it afforded at least a gleam of satisfaction to the latter to perceive by the open communication of Giulio, and the surprise as well as interest he expressed on finding his hearers someway implicated in it, that his visits had certainly no connexion with any project entertained by Stralenheim: the latter, therefore, it was possible, might be wholly ignorant in whose neighbourhood he dwelt; it was highly to be desired that he should remain so: Giulio was therefore strictly cautioned on the subject; and, as the immediate departure of the Count and his wife seemed the only step likely to ascertain their security or rights in life, it became necessary to consider by what means the journey could be undertaken. Bitterly did the Count now lament his own habitual extravagance, and his reliance on a future that had so often deceived him, when he felt that it had robbed him of those sup-

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plies which on the prefent occafion were abfolutely indifpenfable, and, united with his ficknefs, had left him worfe than poor. The fole method that prefented itfelf of providing for the expenfes of a long and dangerous journey was by parting with every valuable they poffeffed: in fo doing they made, indeed, no great facrifice, for they poffeffed nothing that they believed would be henceforward either neceffary or ufeful to them; but the manner in which the bufinefs was to be tranfacted was a circumftance of far more difficulty than the bufinefs itfelf; and in this they had again recourfe to Giulio, whofe condition and modes of life rendered his perfonal fervice no degradation. Through his means they privately converted, though to a great difadvantage, every thing that could be eafily difpofed of into money; after which, taking fuch precautions as might enable them to appear like travellers in an humble,

but decent rank of life, the Count and Josephine at length turned their ſteps towards Bohemia.

In the Palatinate and Upper Saxony war raged with a fury the effects of which were not to be calculated: and though Swediſh and other troops covered the north, they were leſs hoſtile, and, not being actuated by civil diſcord, leſs bloody than elſewhere. No method, therefore, of reaching Bohemia appeared ſo certain as that of paſſing into Sileſia; which, for the moſt part, united in the ſame cauſe with the latter, and at all times ſtrongly incorporated in its policy and views, afforded the ſafeſt paſſage to emigrants of different deſcriptions. The Count was, on the whole, ſufficiently acquainted with the country; and, though yet feeble, and ill able to ſuſtain a journey of ſuch extent, he was not leſs impelled by the neceſſity of the occa-

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ſion to undertake it, than invigorated by the perſuaſion that his ſuſpicions with regard to Stralenheim had been thoſe of an irritable mind; and that, in reality, the latter neither knew him under his aſſumed name, nor kept any watch over his footſteps.

The ſecurity in which the Count believed himſelf was, nevertheleſs, the precurſor of danger. Stralenheim was informed of every material ſtep taken by the former; and he was well pleaſed to ſee him quit Hamburg, where it would have been difficult, if not dangerous, to make any attack upon his perſonal freedom without the moſt unqueſtionable authority: whereas, in the inſignificant towns through which he muſt neceſſarily travel, that with which the Baron had provided himſelf might, by the power of gold, be made to act in full force: and as it was particularly authentic

thentic within the territories of the Houſe of Brandenburg, it was the purpoſe of Stralenheim to attack him near ſome fortreſs within that limit; where, being himſelf a military man, he did not doubt but he ſhould find ſuch connivance as might enable him, if not to effect the Count's confinement for life, at leaſt to ſecure him for a period ſufficiently long to give his adverſary every advantage he could deſire.

Ingenious as craft may be, it is perhaps never ſo much in danger of being defeated as when it encounters the ſuſpicious timidity which reſults from a conſciouſneſs of error and a premature knowledge of life. The Count, throughout the progreſs of his journey, had little elſe to do but to think and to conſider. A ſingularity that occaſionally marked the interrogations put to him, at different barriers, together with obſerving the countenance of an individual

who

who had croffed him more than once, again awakened the latent jealoufy of his nature. He had too much at ftake, and was become habitually too profoundly meditative, not to guard againft the remoteft danger, except fuch as was merely perfonal and accidental, to which he was ever indifferent. That he now looked to was of a more important nature: he could not, indeed, afcertain that there was any: but he fufpected it,—and to fufpect it was enough. At a point of his journey, therefore, when a deviation from it could leaft be gueffed at, he fuddenly ftruck through the bye-roads of a foreft, once more changed his name to that of Kruitzner, and felt affured that he had, for a time at leaft, efcaped all obfervation. Here, however, ended his good fortune. The way he had taken was circuitous and fatiguing; his health was again attacked; his little means daily diminifhed; fubfiftence, hope, life itfelf, feemed hourly

fading from his grafp, and he was fet down in the obfcure fhelter afforded him by his hoft at M——, with only the laft lingering fparks of either remaining.

Afflicting as his fate there continued to be, yet in his calculations with regard to the Baron he had fortunately not been deceived: the route he had taken was one through which the latter had neither directed his inquiries nor his meafures; but Stralenheim, though foiled, was not eafily defeated: he well knew the Count's method of travelling was too humble and economical to carry him further than certain regular diftances, and on this he had reckoned even at the time of his own departure from Hamburg; for though he had not quitted that city till feveral days after his competitor, of the rapidity of whofe proceedings he had not been fufficiently aware, he was convinced that the influence

of

of money would bring him ſoon within track, and enable him to be near enough to enforce his meaſures whenever he judged it prudent to ſet them in motion. In this, however, the Baron made a falſe eſtimate of his own character; for he was not generous; neither, though perſevering, was he active: his journey, therefore, was not purſued with the celerity he expected; and though he had ſufficient reaſon to know he kept his object in view, he did not come up with him. The addreſs with which the Count changed his name and route, defeated the plans, and arreſted the progreſs of the Baron, who was then at Frankfort on the Oder. It was of the firſt importance to him that the immediate heir to the eſtates of Siegendorf ſhould be prevented, for a time at leaſt, from appearing on his patrimonial lands, either to aſſert his own claims or eſtabliſh the validity of his ſon's: if, therefore, he had

wholly escaped the Baron, the journey of the latter was useless, and afforded too little ground of hope to induce him to continue it; since the inheritance it might be easy for him to take possession of, it would be impossible to recover. To these considerations all others gave way, and Stralenheim necessarily remained stationary till tidings of the fugitives should reach him.

Confused accounts of persons answering to the description of those sought, though differing in name and other trifling particulars, seemed at length to ascertain that the Count and his family were within a certain limit. Had the Baron been profuse of his rewards, he would probably have traced the precise spot; but as those rewards chiefly consisted of promises, few of his emissaries imparted more than half of the little they knew; some because they had cunning enough to foresee they might

ſell their diſcoveries to more advantage by degrees, and others becauſe their avarice was not awakened by the hope of any advantage at all. Of the former deſcription were the junto at M——; but Stralenheim had learnt enough to be aſſured his victim could not be far off. Preparing, therefore, without remorſe, to authenticate by every ſpecious form of juſtice the ſeverity of his proceedings, he reſolved to ſecure his perſon on the firſt poſſible opportunity; and he perſuaded himſelf this could be done with more perfect facility, as the order announced no hereditary diſtinction or title of the Count; but, noting him ſimply by the name he had borne at Hamburg, left him not the little chance of profiting by an attention almoſt invariably ſhown to rank.

The ſeaſon, however, was daily leſs favourable to the increaſing impatience of

Stralenheim. The froſt had been ſucceeded by a rapid thaw: the Oder overflowed its banks, and the ſmaller rivers that diſcharged into it had carried away their bridges. There were ſtill here and there, fords, over which the peaſants indeed ventured to paſs; but it was not ſeldom that even they found the undertaking both difficult and dangerous. To all remonſtrances on that ſubject, however, the Baron was inſenſible: the life of a ſoldier had habituated him to hazards of every kind; and he believed that he had only to add more horſes to his carriage, and take other trifling precautions, to aſcertain his ſafety. The poſtillions, in obedience to his command, plunged, though with reluctance, into the ſtream, and it was ſoon obvious that they had not exaggerated the danger. The horſes, as well as thoſe who guided them, nevertheleſs, ſtruggled vigorously againſt it, and at length ſucceeded in

reaching the oppofite fhore; but the force of the current had hurried them beyond the precife track: the bank to which they approached was fteep and dangerous; it was, befides, undermined by the violence of the flood: in the effort of climbing it the ground gave way,—the horfes loft their feet,—the weight of the carriage impelled it violently backwards,—it overfet,—and all the hopes, views, and fchemes of the Baron, were on the point of terminating for ever.

Two ftrangers, who had but lately gained the fhore, were witneffes of the fcene, and, perceiving the danger to be imminent, plunged, with fome hazard to themfelves, into the water. The laft effort of the Baron, on perceiving his fituation, was to open the carriage door, and attempt to throw himfelf out. He had fo far fucceeded, that his refcue was accom-

plished with less difficulty than it otherwise would have been; and though he was to all appearance lifeless, the assistance given by the strangers was not vain. Many peasants also now hastened in aid of the latter; and by their united efforts, not only Stralenheim, but his attendants and baggage, were preserved from the stream. He was conveyed to a habitation not far distant, and every attention shown him the circumstances of the time and place admitted. Once more restored to the consciousness of what was passing around, he became sufficiently convinced of his own rashness to be grateful to those who had preserved him from its effects. They were travellers like himself, and, like himself, somewhat too daring; for their own situation, a few moments before, had been little less critical than his. One of them announced himself to be a Hungarian; the other a native, Saxon. The appearance and

and manners of each, eſpecially thoſe of the latter, beſpoke him above the vulgar rank; and the Baron ſurmiſed they might both probably be Auſtrians, who, from motives of juſtifiable prudence, forbore to avow themſelves as ſuch. The danger they had ſo gallantly encountered in favour of a ſtranger loudly demanded his gratitude; and as he found, on inquiry, that their journey was nearly in the ſame direction with his own, the moſt uſeful and obliging mode of teſtifying it was to provide for the general ſafety by making them his aſſociates, at leaſt till ſuch time as the ſubſiding of the waters ſhould ſecure either party from future difficulties. After a moment's heſitation the ſtrangers accepted the propoſal.

The Baron, however, in eſcaping the ſtream, had not eſcaped all the conſequences of his plunge there. Violent

feverifh fymptoms announced the probability of future fuffering. The houfe to which he had been dragged afforded no accommodation or comfort to alleviate it. He recollected, precifely at this juncture, that he was within the eftates, and not far from the palace, of the Prince de T——, under whom he had ferved; nor did he hefitate to profit by the occafion. His name, though not his perfon, was known to the Intendant at M——; the rank he announced fecured his reception, and thus, at length, without any previous plan or knowledge on his own part, was the Baron fet down within three hundred yards of the man he had travelled fo many leagues in fearch of. Thus, too, were the misfortunes of the unhappy Count brought to a climax, when the name of all others moft hateful to him dropped from the lips of the innocent Marcellin; and when the report of Idenftein confirmed the alarming

intelligence that "*the ſtranger* arrived in the Prince's coach at the palace" was no other than *Baron Stralenheim*.

The ſingular coincidence of circumſtances that brought the latter thither could neither be known nor gueſſed at by the Count. Stralenheim, ſo lately at Hamburg, now cloſe upon him in a devious road, was but too rational a confirmation of all his former ſuſpicions. That the Baron ſought him he could no longer doubt: whether he knew he had found him he was yet to learn; but that his own departure, if it was to be accompliſhed at all, muſt be undertaken immediately, even under the miſerable circumſtances of performing it on foot, could not but be certain. From the long and deep meditation, into which he had been plunged after Idenſtein quitted him, he was firſt rouſed by the timid embrace of Marcellin, whom his mother had ſent to

take

take leave of him for the night. Siegendorf, who felt the cruel probability of its being for ever, ſtrained the boy to his boſom with a melting fondneſs he was not in the habit of teſtifying; while the child, who feared that he had in ſome way innocently tranſgreſſed, laviſhed careſſes on his father that almoſt looked like preſentiment. Joſephine herſelf did not enter: ſhe knew the temper of her huſband ever diſpoſed him to indulge the firſt bitterneſs of his feelings in ſolitude; and if ſhe did not ſympathiſe with, ſhe at leaſt had habituated herſelf to reſpect that proud ſentiment which forbade him to unveil the ſecret receſſes of his heart even to her. She was beſides willing to free both, before they again met, from the interference or obſervation of the child. Siegendorf continued to liſten to the voice of the latter, as it reached him from the further room, till the ſounds died away; when lifting his eyes from the fire, on the embers of which they had

had been long fixed, he ſaw the moon had already riſen. She was to be the ſad and ſolitary witneſs of his intended journey. He could neither reſolve to take leave of Joſephine, nor to depart without doing ſo; and rather from a mechanical deſire of motion than any ſettled plan, he walked out of the houſe.

The night was cold—a bleak and boiſterous north wind had ariſen, and impelled volumes of dark clouds rapidly acroſs the ſky. He turned towards the high road, which was at the extremity of the garden wall, whence it ſank into a woody hollow, at that hour peculiarly ſombre. It ſuited his frame of mind, and he purſued it for ſomewhat more than a quarter of a mile, when the wood ſhelving away on both ſides preſented the open country, and preſented at the ſame moment, to the great ſurpriſe of the Count, a view of that inundation with which the

late

late rains had covered it—the whole landſcape ſeeming to form a ſheet of water, over which the moon-beams played with a radiance that at once aſcertained the fact. —To this friendly light he was evidently indebted for his ſafety, if not his life!—but his mind was not in a tone ſo to conſider the diſpenſation. He turned ſullenly back, and, continuing his walk round the wild and lonely outſkirts of the town, came at length within reach of the hum of men.—It was hateful to his ear. His eye involuntarily glanced towards the palace. Many of the apartments had lights in them, and throughout the whole building there was an air of unuſual feſtivity and mirth. "I alſo lived in Arcadia*," murmured

* Il y a un payſage de Pouſſin où l'on voit de jeunes bergères qui danſent au ſon du chalumeau: et, à l'écart, un tombeau, avec cette inſcription, "Je vivois auſſi dans la délicieuſe Arcadie!"

DIDEROT, *ſur la Poëſie Dramatique.*

A landſcape of Pouſſin's repreſents a groupe of ſhepherdeſſes dancing to the muſic of the pipe. In the back ground

mured the Count, as he traverſed the ſtreets, impatient to hide himſelf from every human eye. Contrary to what was uſual they contained many idlers, who were paſſing home, or elſewhere; and from their talk, as they croſſed him, he learnt that the Intendant had, by the command of the Baron, ordered dancing and a ſupper. Siegendorf was not more than five hundred yards from his own abode, when he was rudely joſtled by a man who paſſed him; and turning round he perceived it was Idenſtein. In the humour the Count felt himſelf, life, though it were his own, or that of any other human being, was vile in his eyes; but he ſecretly deſpiſed Idenſtein, and judged his own perſonal ſtrength to be ſo much the ſuperior of the two, that he hardly deigned to reſent what he never-

ground is ſeen a tomb, with this inſcription, "I alſo lived amid the delights of Arcadia!"

DIDEROT, *upon Dramatic Poetry.*

theleſs

theleſs ſuſpected to be an inſult. He only ſtopt, and ſternly aſked Idenſtein, "If he knew him?"—

"I can't tell any body that does, Mr. *Kruitzner*, except, indeed, it may be *one!*" returned Idenſtein with a marked and inſolent ſneer. The tone in which he ſpoke, together with his general appearance, convinced the Count that what he had conſidered as an inſult might as probably be the effect of inebriety: But who was the *one* that knew him? there was ſomething in the words too accordant with the chain of the hearer's thoughts to eſcape his attention. He nevertheleſs walked on in ſilence, though he perceived that Idenſtein ſtill kept by his ſide, and, in a voice of intoxication, continued to mutter ſomething, like a man who is confuſedly purſuing the thread of his own ideas.

"The

"The queſtion may as well be ſettled here," ſaid he, at length, laying his hand roughly on the arm of the Count. The latter raiſed his eyes, and perceived they were preciſely oppoſite one entrance of the palace.

"What queſtion may be ſettled?" replied he, fiercely ſhaking Idenſtein off.

"Whether you are really the man Baron Stralenheim is in ſearch of, or not!"

The indignant Count, now driven alike beyond all meaſure of patience or of prudence, and believing, from the motion of Idenſtein, that he intended again to lay hands on him, ſeized the latter forcibly by the collar, and, throwing him with no little violence from him, ſaw him fall at his length on the pavement. What injury was likely to be the conſequence he neither

knew nor cared; but before he closed his own door, he perceived more than one person issue from that of the palace, and, by the moonlight, believed he distinguished the Intendant to be amongst them.

The wildness and abruptness with which Siegendorf entered, alarmed Josephine even more than his absence had done. Hardly had he indistinctly, and in few words, given her to understand the cause of both, when they heard the street-door open, which the Count had not had the precaution to secure, and the voices of Idenstein and the Intendant, apparently loud and threatening, below. Frantic with passion, the Count looked wildly around him for some weapon of defence: he believed himself on the point of suffering personal indignity, and every gleam of reason or of prudence vanished before the idea. The distracted Josephine conjured—implored

him

him to retreat before the ſtorm. In the laſt moment of deſperation his eye glanced upon a large and ſharp knife which lay on the table near, and with which ſhe had been cutting bread for the child's ſupper. Siegendorf ſeized it with an earneſt graſp, as if with it he had ſeized his fate: then pauſing irreſolutely for a moment, he at length turned from the door towards which he had advanced, and paſt abruptly through another in the oppoſite direction:—not leſs determined than before, but like a man who feeling he has power in his hands, is become leſs deſperate.

Idenſtein and the Intendant ſtaggered in almoſt on the inſtant, both evidently in a ſtate of intoxication; and Joſephine, who a few moments before thought ſhe could have encountered a hoſt, turned pale and faint before the image of brutality. The violence of her emotion, however, pre-

ſently ſubſided, when ſhe diſcovered the Intendant to be in fact only boiſterouſly merry; and that the declared purport of the viſit, as far as either party could make themſelves underſtood, was to reconcile the difference between Idenſtein and her huſband. Vehemently did ſhe now long to recal the latter—to diſſipate the phrenſy of his mind by convincing him that what had lately paſt was a mere frolic of intoxication, and to reſtore to it that balmy hope which ſeemed to have fled the manſion. It was impoſſible, however, to venture upon a ſtep thus dangerous and delicate; and ſhe found herſelf fortunate beyond her expectations in being able to ſoothe the beings before her into temporary quietneſs, and finally to retreat.

Her gentle voice then prepared to tranquilliſe the boſom of her huſband, and ſhe trod in ſearch of him with a light and rapid

rapid ſtep along the apartments. They were dark and ſolitary! She then concluded he had quitted them through ſome of the various detached doors—all, however, were cloſed, and, as uſual, ſlightly ſecured!—A wonder, vague—undefined—alarming, ſeized upon her, and ſhe haſtily paſſed forward through the houſe, but Siegendorf was no where to be ſeen in it. An open window, at length, attracted her notice, with ſome heavy furniture near, by which, though the caſement was high, it might be reached. She could not with certainty recollect whether ſhe had cloſed it, as was her cuſtom towards evening, and with an anxious eye ſhe ſurveyed its exterior diſtance from the ground: the deſcent was dangerous in the extreme, but it was not wholly impracticable; and the cruel apprehenſion that Siegendorf, impelled by the agitation of the moment, had accompliſhed his meditated purpoſe, and

really departed for Bohemia, at once aſſailed her. Even this, however, became now the leaſt of her terrors: the deep abſtraction and gloom in which he had been plunged throughout the evening—the phrenſy of rage that ſeemed to have ſucceeded it—the fever which ſhe well knew beat in his pulſe—and the actual hopeleſsneſs of his fate, armed, as he unhappily was, with the means of ending it, all united to inſpire her with the moſt gloomy forebodings. Every hideous form of ſuicide preſented itſelf to her imagination: ſhe ruſhed breathleſs through the apartments, ſtarting as ſhe entered each, with the expectation of what it would preſent to her, yet impatient to explore the next. In the irritated ſtate of her nerves and ſpirits, ſtrange phantoms began to ſwim before her eyes, and unreal voices ſounded in her ears; incapable, at length, of further ſtruggle, ſhe returned to the

chamber

chamber of Marcellin, whom her agony and terrors had awakened; and laying her wan cheek againſt the roſy one of her child, loſt all conſciouſneſs of ſuffering in temporary inſenſibility.

For what period of time this laſted Joſephine was unable to aſcertain: but ſhe was not yet ſenſible to the pulſation of returning life, when the ſound of her own name ſeemed to recal it; ſhe opened her eyes—the boy, ſuppoſing her aſleep, had again ſunk into ſlumber in her arms, but the flaſhing and uncertain blaze of a candle, now burning in its ſocket, ſhowed her huſband ſtanding by the bedſide. He might well have been miſtaken for one of thoſe forms of ſuicide her imagination had painted: his eyes had loſt the fury which lately animated them—his cheek was wholly colourleſs, as though the blood had indeed "all deſcended to the labour-

ing heart:"—in one hand he held the knife which had been the chief ſource of her terrors; the other was preſt forcibly within his boſom. Joſephine attempted to offer him hers: he laid down the knife, folded his arm gently round her, and, drawing her towards him, related in a low and ſmothered voice the ſtory of his abſence.—It was, alas! little calculated to remove from her heart the horrible weight with which it was oppreſt!

Siegendorf, in ruſhing ſo haſtily from an encounter with thoſe whoſe blood he ſecretly feared he ſhould bring upon his head, had retreated to the laſt apartment of the range—it was a chamber: here he made a deſperate ſtand, and, placing himſelf againſt the wainſcot, prepared to plunge his knife deliberately, though not without warning, into the boſom of the firſt man who ſhould attempt to lay hands

on

on him; the vigour with which he preſt againſt that which ſupported him, ſuddenly cauſed it to give way; he looked round with ſurpriſe, and perceived it was not an accident, but the effect of ſome ſpring which he either touched or ſtood upon. It was no moment for deliberation!—he paſt haſtily through the aperture, and, without conſidering how he ſhould return, cloſed the pannel. He was immediately involved in total darkneſs: his extended arms, however, informed him, as his eye had indiſtinctly done, that he was in a gallery of no conſiderable width; floored, perfectly dry, and, as he believed, carpeted: the ſtrangeneſs of the event filled his mind with painful curioſity, and he continued to advance more rapidly than in a cooler moment he probably would have ventured to do. Suddenly the ground, by ſome extraordinary impulſe, ſeemed to ſhake beneath his feet; but

but before he had leiſure to queſtion the cauſe, it announced itſelf—for confuſed ſounds of diſtant conviviality burſt upon his ear, and ſnatches of muſic aſſured him he was in the neighbourhood of dancers. The myſtery was ſolved at once: it was clear that, having traverſed the houſe which immediately adjoined to his own, he had reached the interior of the palace; and the various ſtories related of the intrigue between the Counteſs and the Prince paſſed in a moment acroſs his recollection with the force of authenticity. While he continued to think, the ſounds died away—he left them behind him, and found he touched the extremity of the paſſage. The ſpring, inviſible on one ſide, was palpable at once on the other; encouraged by profound ſilence, he gently preſt it, and found himſelf preciſely where the previous calculation of a moment would have told him he would find himſelf—

ſelf—in the ſtate chamber of the palace, with which that in his own houſe communicated, and the bed-room of Baron Stralenheim!

Aſtoniſhment, approaching to ſtupor, chained up the faculties of Siegendorf; yet an inſtinctive impulſe of ſelf-preſervation made him graſp with ferocious boldneſs the knife he ſtill held. The apartment was extremely ſpacious, and magnificently hung: a bed of purple velvet, fringed with ſilver, ſtood under a canopied receſs on one ſide; on the other was a cabinet of curious wood, ornamented with precious ſtones, and richly mounted: lighted tapers were placed near, and letters, as well as other papers, confuſedly ſcattered over it; but the object which at once arreſted the attention of the Count was ſeveral rouleaus of gold that lay ranged beſide them.—Laſtly, near the fire, abhorred by

his

his eyes, and now fearful indeed to his imagination, was Stralenheim himſelf, ſtretched in an eaſy chair, and buried in a deep ſleep.

The dæmons of deſperation and cupidity ſeized at once upon their victim in every form of temptation ingenuity could deviſe. Driven thus to the verge of a precipice, without one hand to ſave, one hope to ſoothe him, poverty—inſult—a dungeon! a deſpoiled inheritance—a helpleſs child, and a deſpairing wife, paſſed at once in gloomy perſpective before his imagination. How ſhould he, who had never known what it was to contend with one imperious wiſh, now ſtem the torrent of all? He believed it almoſt a duty to free himſelf, for the ſake even of others, from that abject penury which ſeemed to include every evil. —His hand was on the gold, when Stralenheim moved. Rendered deſperate alike

by

by ſhame and apprehenſion, Siegendorf fiercely raiſed the knife—happily the motion of the Baron brought with it no conſciouſneſs—he merely turned his face from the light which incommoded him. The Count, after gazing on him for a moment, haſtily thruſt into his boſom that portion of the gold which was neareſt:—retreated —cloſed the door—and, in the dreadful perturbation and diſgrace of the occaſion, breathed out an imperfect ejaculation to that God who had providentially ſaved him from being a murderer!

This was no tale of comfort to the ear or the heart of Joſephine! It brought too cloſe to the latter that afflicting doubt ſhe had ſo often baniſhed from it—on what point of her huſband's character ſhe could finally depend! She ſaw him driven from error to error—from temptation to temptation—ſtill yielding—ſtill repenting—and

where

where would be the laſt? Sacrificing every thing by turns, either to falſe calculations, or ungoverned paſſions: his father—his wife—even his honour! at leaſt that pure and ſecret ſenſe which ſeemed to her its eſſence. Murder had already become amongſt the almoſt inevitable temptations of his fate!—She ventured not to pauſe upon the ideas which thus irreſiſtibly forced themſelves upon her mind. Other conſiderations, far ſubordinate indeed, but ſufficiently important in their nature, were open to the obſervation of both.—Of what uſe was the gold thus dangerouſly and unjuſtly acquired?—It could not extricate them from their entanglements at M——; it could not even be offered to Idenſtein!—it could buy them nothing!—it could obtain them nothing!—It was as droſs in their hands—or even worſe—ſince, but to be ſuſpected of poſſeſſing it would bring forth at once accuſation and proof! would

throw

throw them inevitably and disgracefully into the power of Stralenheim, and give to his most vindictive measures the sanction of law—alas! almost that of justice!—These, and similar considerations, had, in the tumult of his thoughts, wholly escaped the attention of the Count. Goaded as he had been to desperation by the apprehended insults of Idenstein, in possessing himself of gold, he had, for the moment, believed he possessed himself of every thing:—but it was not so!—so far otherwise, that he felt he could not purchase his liberation, even though he were to make the last humiliating sacrifice of every manly principle. Dissimulation, falsehood itself, would be of no avail towards accomplishing that purpose. Though his real condition in life was an enigma, it was well known that he could have no resources at M——, and the only shadow of deceit he could have employed was precluded effec-

tually by the Argus-like watch of Weilburg, who would be aſſured he had received no remittances by letter. The Count then, far from having palliated even the obvious and coarſer evils of his fate, had, in fact, only added to them; ſince the flight his poverty did but threaten to impede, his newly-acquired wealth forbade him to attempt. For what,—ſhould ſuſpicion be awakened,—might in his abſence be the probable fate of his wife and child?

In reflexions like theſe the little that remained of night ſoon fled away, and morning brought with it appropriate fears and ſorrows: for now Idenſtein might again obtrude upon them! That he was an inſtrument in the hands of the Baron his own wanton inſolence had effectually teſtified; and that he could be formidable without that circumſtance they too well knew. The ſenſes and the heart of Siegendorf

gendorf ſeemed at length, however, dull to apprehenſion of every kind. He reſigned himſelf with a ſort of ſullen deſpondency to his fate; and if his pulſe underwent any change on hearing the voice of the Intendant, his countenance did not announce it.

The Intendant himſelf was languid and heavy with the exceſſes of the preceding evening: it was evident, nevertheleſs, that he came to obſerve and to ſcrutiniſe, though he ſtrove to veil the intention.. A few moments' converſation was ſufficient to convince both the Count and Joſephine that their viſitor knew nothing of what had paſſed in the chamber of Stralenheim, who, finding himſelf unuſually ill the night before, had taken a large quantity of laudanum, and was not yet ſtirring. The obſervations of the Intendant, therefore, went only to the ſame point with thoſe of Iden-

ftein: both were now fully perfuaded that Kruitzner and his wife were the parties fought by Stralenheim, and each equally defirous to know the value of the fecret before he finally parted with it to his employer: nor was the Intendant without a curiofity to difcover—what he perceived the policy of the Baron had hitherto ftudiously withheld—the names and condition of his intended victims. His vifit, therefore, was long, wearifome, and, as is often the cafe with fuch vifits as mean every thing, feemed to mean nothing. It obtained him no information; and he at length retired, as little fatisfied with it as thofe had been to whom it was made. Neither the Count nor Jofephine, however, heard without a filent fenfe of felf-congratulation, that Idenftein fuffered fo feverely from the effects of intemperance as to leave no probability of his quitting his chamber till late.

The departure of the Intendant ſeemed to promiſe a momentary reſpite of perſecution:—but the hope was illuſive.—A voice to which they were not familiar, heard in parley with Marcellin, attracted the attention of the Count and his wife ſoon after their gueſt had quitted them: the child ran haſtily into the room, and announced a ſtranger, who inquired for the Intendant. Siegendorf advanced with no leſs rapidity: his ſoul ſeemed to forebode that it was Stralenheim, and to dare the encounter. The ſtranger on his part either ſuppoſing the child did not underſtand him, or that the rank of the perſons on whom he intruded diſpenſed with ceremony, entered almoſt at the ſame moment.—He was a much younger man, however, than Stralenheim, and of a more noble appearance. His eye fell firſt on Joſephine:—He pauſed—looked earneſtly at her, and from her to the Count; repeating, not without

 heſitation,

hesitation, the question he had before asked:—faintly was it replied to; for almost before the sounds could escape on either side, the eyes and palpitating hearts of each present had asked and answered a question far more important! Josephine and her husband believed it possible they might mistake—but the stranger did not doubt! he knew, and in a moment recognised his parents!—It was Conrad!

With a burst of agonising joy the mother threw herself into his arms, nor did Siegendorf feel less acutely the sudden and inexplicable throb of nature, increased too as it was by every circumstance of time or place that could add to it.—To have found him! found that son so long and so anxiously wished for! and at a period so critical, seemed little less than the immediate interposition of Heaven! Nor did the particulars that attended it appear less a subject

of

of perplexity and wonder than the event itſelf: that Conrad ſhould have been the deliverer of Stralenheim—the companion of his journey—an inmate of the ſame houſe, was a coincidence of circumſtances ſo extraordinary as almoſt to be incredible! Of the wonder, however, Conrad himſelf was wholly ignorant, till it was now haſtily and vaguely communicated to him. The mere circumſtance of meeting the Baron, had to him nothing remarkable in it! the ſervice he had rendered the latter had ariſen from the impulſe of the moment; for he neither knew, nor believed, even when he was told, that he had reſcued an enemy or a competitor. Nurtured as Conrad had been in fondneſs and indulgence, no menace of a rival heir had ever offended his ear; no name, but that of his father, had ever been announced as ſtanding between him and his inheritance.—All that was neceſſary to be known appeared to him there-

fore ſufficiently aſcertained when he beheld his parents; nor did the tumult of their mutual joy ſeem a ſeaſon for other explanation. How ſweet were the emotions with which they liſtened to that haſty one the moment allowed Conrad to offer on his part! With what delight did they hear that the ſon againſt whom their hearts had ſo often murmured, had been wanting in no duty or affection: that he had voluntarily and even raſhly quitted the ſplendid lot aſſigned him, to ſeek thoſe whom childhood had endeared to his memory, and either ſhare with them, or renounce his own pretenſions in life.

Ages would have ſeemed too little for the ſtory each was now obliged to compriſe in moments. How the future was to be regulated, and whether, thus fortified with double claims, it would be adviſable that they ſhould openly and immediately

defy

defy the power of Stralenheim, or, ſilently withdrawing, eſtabliſh their own rights on the ſpot where his rank and influence would be comparatively inſignificant, were queſtions too mighty and important to be eaſily explained to Conrad, or, when explained, to be determined upon. Till they were, profound ſilence was alike the intereſt of all. And ah! how eaſy was the reſtriction! with hearts once more kindling to hope, and recollections abſorbed in the tranſport of the occaſion, the Count and Joſephine felt no want, no wiſh but to gaze and to liſten. All they had loſt—all they had deſired—all for the purſuit of which they had ſteeped themſelves in poverty and ſorrow, vaniſhed before the feeling which had now taken poſſeſſion of their boſoms: while Conrad, preſſing to his the little Marcellin, concealed his face in the boſom of the ſmiling boy, as if he found in this new and unſuſpected tie a

tender medium, through which to announce his own fenfibility!

Jofephine, however, anxious that no premature difcovery on the part of Stralenheim fhould blight the profpect of the future, was earneft to fend her fon from her. Conrad only mufed at her remonftrances, and fmiled half difdainfully at her fears.

"Stralenheim," faid he, "does not appear to me altogether the man you take him for:—but were it even otherwife, he owes me gratitude not only for the paft, but for what he fuppofes to be my prefent employment. I faved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He has been robbed laft night—is fick—a ftranger—and in no condition to difcover the villain who has plundered him: I have pledged myfelf to do it—and the bufinefs

on

on which I ſought the Intendant was chiefly that."

The Count felt as though he had received a ſtroke upon the brain. Death in any form, unaccompanied with dishonour, would have been preferable to the pang that ſhot through both that and his heart. Indignantly had he groaned under the remorſe of the paſt, the humiliation thus incurred by it he would hardly have tolerated from any human being; yet was it brought home to him, through a medium ſo bitterly afflicting, as defied all calculation. At the word *villain*, his lips quivered, and his eyes flaſhed fire. It was the vice of his character, ever to convert the ſubjects of ſelf-reproach into thoſe of indignation.

"And who," ſaid he, ſtarting furiously from his ſeat, "has entitled you to brand

thus

thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who," he added with increaſing agitation, "has taught you that it would be ſafe even for my ſon to inſult me?"

"It is not neceſſary to know the perſon of a ruffian," replied Conrad indignantly, "to give him the appellation he merits:—and what is there in common between my father and ſuch a character?"

"*Every thing*," ſaid Siegendorf, bitterly—"for that ruffian was your father!"

Conrad ſtarted back with incredulity and amazement: then meaſured the Count with a long and earneſt gaze, as though, unable to disbelieve the fact, he felt inclined to doubt whether it were really his father who avowed it.

"Conrad,"

"Conrad," exclaimed the latter, interpreting his looks, and in a tone that ill disguised the increasing anguish of his own soul, "before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye learn to understand my actions!—Young and inexperienced in the world—reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for *you* to judge of the force of the passions, or the temptations of misery?—Wait till like me you have blighted your fairest hopes—have endured humiliation and sorrow—poverty and famine—before you pretend to judge of their effect on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive—Should *you* see the being at your mercy who stands between you, and every thing that is dear or noble in life!—Who is ready to tear from you your name—your inheritance—your very life itself—congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder, and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent,

pent, who now lives, perhaps, to ſting us all!—You do not know this man," continued he with the ſame incoherent eagerneſs, and impetuously ſilencing Conrad who would have ſpoken—" I do!—I believe him to be mean—ſordid—deceitful!—You will conceive yourſelf ſafe becauſe you are young and brave!—Learn, however, from the two inſtances before you, none are ſo ſecure but deſperation or ſubtilty may reach them!—Stralenheim in the palace of a prince was in my power!—My knife was held over him!—a ſingle moment would have ſwept him from the face of the earth, and with him all my future fears:—I forbore—and I am now in his.—Are you certain that you are not ſo too? Who aſſures you he does not know you?—Who tells you that he has not lured you into his ſociety, either to rid himſelf of you for ever, or to plunge you with your family into a dungeon?—*Me*, it is plain, he has known

invariably

invariably through every change of fortune or of name—and why not you?—*Me* he has entrapt—are you more difcreet? He has wound the fnares of Idenftein around me:—of a reptile, whom, a few years ago, I would have fpurned from my prefence, and whom, in fpurning now, I have furnifhed with frefh venom:—Will *you* be more patient?——Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occafion, and temptations too exquifite for human fortitude to mafter or endure." The Count paffionately ftruck his hand on his forehead as he fpoke, and rufhed out of the room.

Conrad, whofe lips and countenance had more than once announced an impatient defire to interrupt his father during the early part of his difcourfe, ftunned by the wildnefs and vehemence with which it was purfued, had funk towards the clofe of it into profound filence. The anxious eyes

eyes of Jofephine, from the moment they loft fight of her hufband, had been turned towards her fon; and, for the firft time in her life, fhe felt her heart a prey to divided affections; for, while the frantic wildnefs of Siegendorf almoft irrefiftibly impelled her to follow him, fhe was yet alive to all the danger of leaving Conrad a prey to reflexions hoftile to every fentiment of filial duty or refpect. The latter, after a long filence, raifed his inquiring looks to hers; and, whatever the impreffion under which his mind laboured, he underftood too well the deep and painful forrow imprinted on her countenance not inftantly to conceal it.

"Thefe are only the fyftems of my father," faid he, continuing earneftly to gaze on her. "My mother thinks not with him?"

Jofephine

Joſephine ſpoke not: there was an oppreſſion at her heart that robbed her of the power. Conrad covered his face with his hand, and reclined it for a moment on her ſhoulder.

"Explain to me," ſaid he, "after a ſecond pauſe, "what are the claims of Stralenheim, and why he is thus formidable to us." Joſephine was ill able to undertake the taſk: ſhe felt it a duty, however, to expel, if poſſible, from the boſom of her ſon, feelings alike diſgraceful and injurious to his father; and to exonerate the latter, as far as circumſtances would permit, from that cenſure to which his intemperate paſſion had ſubjected him. It was not eaſy, however, ſo to relate the paſt events of Siegendorf's life as deeply to intereſt a noble or an upright mind. The candid and tender Joſephine, therefore, almoſt betrayed the cauſe ſhe ſtrove to ſerve by an

effect

effect of that ingenuousness which was natural to her, and which she too evidently struggled to suppress. She detailed, with as much simplicity and exactness as the time and particulars would allow, the circumstance by which Siegendorf conceived himself within the power of Stralenheim; the events that occurred at Hamburg, the intelligence of Giulio in which Conrad had so deep a share, and every agitating and distressing occurrence that had since preyed upon the temper or feelings of his father. Lastly, she painted that critical point at which he now stood with respect to the Baron, and all the possible evils that might result from the persecution of the latter.

The countenance of Conrad gathered into increasing attention as she continued to speak; and he became, as might well be expected, profoundly meditative, when he

perceived

perceived the new light her narrative threw over the fate of his family. *That* showed him at once the mighty stake, for obtaining which Stralenheim had so deeply schemed, and all the hazard of the present conjuncture: what he had believed to be little less than madness in the discourse of the Count was, however exaggerated by irritation of mind, yet evidently grounded on the most alarming facts: and unwilling as he himself was to pain his mother by the avowal of any corroborating circumstances, he was yet secretly sensible that, in the progress of his own intimacy with the Baron, he had reason to surmise that the latter was in pursuit of some enemy whom he had both authority and inclination to crush. In this secret Conrad had hitherto felt little interest; he now perceived he had the deepest. While revolving it he was bewildered with the recollection of that new entangle-

ment which his father had ſo lately made for himſelf; and ſaw too evidently, that, were it poſſible to defeat the great aim of Stralenheim by a united and open defiance, which yet they had abundant reaſon to doubt, there would ſtill remain the probability of a diſcovery that could not fail to overwhelm them with ſhame and diſgrace. Among the Prince's houſehold there might be many who knew the communication between Kruitzner's reſidence and the palace: poſſibly the Intendant himſelf: To guard the ſecret of the Baron's loſſes was, therefore, the only method of defeating ſuſpicion: nor was this altogether ſo hopeleſs an undertaking as it appeared; for Stralenheim, when entruſting to Conrad the particulars of the robbery, had himſelf doubted whether prudence did not rather require him to bury it in ſilence, than inſult the domeſtics of his Highneſs by a charge he might find it impoſſible to

ſubſtantiate.

ſubſtantiate. This opinion Conrad had combated; and the conduct of the buſineſs had, in conſequence, been finally ſubmitted to his diſcretion: a word from him would, therefore, perhaps ſtill determine the Baron to ſilence; and aware, as the former now was, of the innocence of thoſe before ſuſpected, he might utter that word without dishonour or inſincerity.

The diſpoſition of Conrad differed widely from that of his father: it had leſs paſſion and more deciſion. The difficulties with which he was encumbered faded, therefore, as he continued to meditate on the means of removing them. While liſtening to the Count's diſcourſe, it had appeared to him all confuſion, myſtery, and chimera: he was at length maſter of the ſubject: he ſaw it in its cleareſt and ſtrongeſt light, free from the paſſionate irritation of Siegendorf, or the ſofter per-

 turbation

turbation of Joſephine; though not without thoſe attendant feelings that peculiarly marked his own character. His countenance, therefore, cleared, and he had the air of a man who, relieved from a wild and tormenting uncertainty, begins remotely to determine the point on which he muſt reſt. He perceived that it was indiſpenſable to the ſafety of his parents that they ſhould, without delay, be extricated from the humiliating and perilous ſituation in which they then ſtood; and to the future claims of all, that they ſhould be perſonally as well as jointly aſſerted in the country whence they were derived. It was not poſſible for the moſt decided mind immediately to aſcertain the manner in which theſe meaſures could be effected; but Conrad pledged himſelf to accompliſh them in ſome way; and his mother, who had conſidered his long meditation as an inauſpicious omen, felt,

while

while he continued to ſpeak, a ſweet aſſurance that he would ſucceed. It was agreed that he ſhould return an hour after the cloſe of evening, to communicate the reſult of his own deliberations, as well as what paſſed in the interim at the palace; where, ſhould any ſteps be taken that appeared alarming, he would be at hand to fruſtrate or oppoſe them.

At the moment of Conrad's departure, he was ſurpriſed by the entrance of the Hungarian, who, directed by a chance inquiry, had come thither in ſearch of him. The latter had been aſſiſtant with himſelf in reſcuing Stralenheim from the danger of the water, and had conſequently partaken of his hoſpitality at M——: but as his manners did not bear decidedly the ſtamp of high birth like thoſe of Conrad, he was far from being taken as familiarly to the confidence or ſociety of the Baron. Joſe-

phine had at that moment no eye or ear for nice diſcrimination: conceiving her viſitor to be the aſſociate of her ſon, ſhe did not, however, omit the civilities of life; but Conrad, who perceived it would be difficult to conceal the tender relation in which he ſtood to his mother, was now impatient to depart; and hardly had he quitted the houſe when, ſhaking off his companion, whom the pre-occupied ſtate of his mind rendered an encumbrance, he withdrew to revolve in ſolitude, and with deep conſideration, thoſe plans and feelings to which the ſingular events of the morning had given birth.

Joſephine, previous to the departure of her ſon, had received from his hands a ring of very conſiderable price. Money he plainly learnt from her detail could not ſafely be offered to Idenſtein: yet ſome valuable that ſhould ſecure the poſſeſſor

from

from his inſults might, nevertheleſs, ſhould the preſſure of circumſtances demand it, be produced, perhaps, without danger; and he ſubmitted it to her diſcretion, and that of his father, either to retain or diſpoſe of the jewel in queſtion in any way they ſhould deem moſt expedient. The Count was now in a frame of mind to liſten to the event of his ſon's viſit. The fever of his ſpirits had ſubſided: the ſofter and more delightful emotions by which he had been agitated at the firſt ſight of Conrad had reſumed their place in his boſom; and though he had not been able to reſolve on voluntarily re-entering the room he had quitted, he yet liſtened to the parting ſteps of his ſon with anxious fondneſs and unavailing regret. Under this impreſſion there was ſomething peculiarly touching in the token of tender intereſt and concern the ring offered: there was even more in it

than the circumſtance itſelf ſeemed to preſent.

Jewels, in the more remote periods of ſociety, were conſidered as a ſort of heir loom, and rarely changed their faſhion or their owners: that now before him the Count remembered to have frequently ſeen in common with many others, deemed the neceſſary and ceremonious appendages of a ſplendour he had believed inſeparable from his fate. He was at that period in the very dawn and firſt bloom of manhood! How ſtrange had ſince been the alteration both in himſelf and in all around! The ſame jewel was now drawn from the hand of his ſon, and for the ſole purpoſe of reſcuing him from the bittereſt poverty!—His youth was almoſt paſt!—his ſelf-importance annihilated!—the current of time had carried away half of thoſe golden hopes with which life had been freighted, and

his

his own indiſcretion had made a wreck of the remainder!

Conſiderations like theſe were calculated to reduce the high tone of his imperious ſpirit, and bring him painfully down to the level of humanity and reaſon. They were, indeed, but too neceſſary to prepare him for what was to follow; for while he yet continued to muſe over the ring he was ſurpriſed with the appearance of Idenſtein. —The contemplations of the Count had inſenſibly devolved from the paſt to the future: and a plan which, though hazardous, did not appear unpromiſing, had preſented itſelf to his imagination. Some perſon it was evident he muſt, to a certain degree, confide in, before it was poſſible he ſhould free himſelf from the fetters that bound him to M——. His circle was too narrow to leave much ſcope for deliberation.

Weilburg was merely a paſſive ſpy, with whom he had little communication: his mind revolted from the Intendant with that invincible diſdain which low cunning and purſe-proud habits ever engender: neither did he believe it poſſible, cloſely as the latter was connected with Stralenheim, to purchaſe either his ſilence or his acquieſcence. In Idenſtein, though there was much occaſional inſolence, there was ſomething leſs habitually offenſive; and had he not been needy he would probably have been only inſignificant. The ſame temptation, therefore, and the ſame credulity that made him an inſtrument in the hands of one man, might, if duly acted upon, operate in favour of another: and though in the ſcale of ſociety a being thus venal and trifling ranked, according to the eſtimation of the Count, among the loweſt of the low, yet, by a ſentiment not un-

common

common to proud minds, he felt it, therefore, the lefs difficult to defcend, and treat with him on his own ground.

It would hardly be poffible to conceive a ftate of more whimfical embarrafsment than that which took place in the mind of Idenftein at the courteoufnefs of his reception. He entered with a temper extremely fullen, and, as he believed, determined: his recollection of the rencounter that had taken place the evening before, though very imperfect, was, indeed, fuch as made him refolve to avoid all perfonal extremities with the Count; but, as he knew enough to be affured that Baron Stralenheim's meafures with regard to the former were drawing to a crifis, he was willing to take his laft chance for all poffible fhare in the event of them; and to extort from fome fudden guft of paffion, which Jofephine's prefence would prevent from becoming dangerous,

dangerous, what it ſeemed no longer probable he ſhould obtain by craft. But he was now to be encountered with his own weapons: for Siegendorf, who, deſpite of the perplexities of his ſituation, yet felt a confidence inſpired by the late favourable circumſtances and the certain ſupport of his ſon, had reſumed the command of his temper, and was no longer the imperious, unbending, and unobſervant character he had hitherto appeared. Idenſtein thus defeated, he hardly knew why or how in his meditated attack, ſank inſenſibly into a ſort of ſilent and wondering liſtener while the Count continued to talk; till the latter advancing ſlowly and obſcurely towards his aim, made him at laſt remotely comprehend that it might be more for his advantage to betray, than to forward, the cauſe in which he had enliſted.

Throughout the whole circle of Iden-

ſtein's ideas this had never yet made one. The poverty of Kruitzner had ſtared him ſo obviously in the face, that neither the delicate habits of Joſephine, nor the air of diſtinction which even in his moſt humiliating moments eminently marked the Count, had been able to remove the eyes of his aſſociate from that formidable ſpectre: but when, in its place, phantoms of grandeur and affluence were preſented to him, the whole proſpect of the future underwent a ſudden change. He recollected, what was ſtrictly true, that he had, in fact, little reaſon to be ſatisfied with the Intendant; who, whatever was the value of the ſervice they were mutually to render Stralenheim, had ſuffered his coadjutor to diſcover too evidently that *he* would have little ſhare in the reward. With Stralenheim himſelf he had even leſs cauſe to be pleaſed. He had ſeen him only once; but their meeting had ſerved, neverthelefs, to diſplay

play thoſe traits of cold and forbidding arrogance which at all times marked the character of the Baron; and which, as he was taught by the ſelfiſh cunning of the Intendant to ſuppoſe Idenſtein of no conſequence to his plans, he did not attempt to diſſemble. Small as the conſequence of the latter might ſeem in the eyes of others, in his own, however, it was pretty conſiderable; and his zeal was already cooled in a cauſe that neither promiſed him recompenſe nor thanks. While he continued, therefore, to pauſe with apparent complacency upon the arguments preſented to him, the Count watched the critical moment; and, ſenſible that he had himſelf advanced too far now to recede, he produced the jewel. Idenſtein ſtarted with aſtoniſhment! Chance, and ſome commercial connexions, made him a judge of its value. He looked earneſtly at it, and conſidered long. The

Count

Count had alſo conſidered well before he offered it: although to him it would have been known from amidſt ten thouſand others, it bore, as he believed, no family diſtinction, no appropriate mark, that could ever aſcertain its original owner to an indifferent perſon: nor had he, in fact, an intention to part with it, except on ſuch terms as ſhould render all that might follow immaterial to him.

The hitherto wavering fidelity of Idenſtein ſeemed at length on the point of being finally ſhaken: the Count purſued the advantage. With an equivocal and half confidence, he now obſerved, " that he had himſelf important reaſons for continuing his journey, wholly remote from any purſuit or project that Stralenheim might be engaged in—a purſuit of which it was by no means proved that he was the object, although the mere circumſtance of being

being mistaken for ſuch might very conſiderably embarraſs him." Siegendorf, though almoſt aſſured of ſucceſs, was not, however, ſo unguarded as to betray either his name or condition: on the contrary, he ſtill cautiously veiled both. But his air—his tone—an internal conſciouſneſs that he was nearly, though not wholly, ſpeaking the truth, had that almoſt irreſiſtible effect on his hearer, truth rarely fails to produce. Idenſtein was not indeed deceived into doubting whether or no Kruitzner would prove the perſon ſought by the Baron; his conviction on that ſubject was even ſtronger than before, but his intereſt in believing it was leſs, in proportion as a more immediate and certain advantage than any yet held out to him now preſented itſelf: he felt a ſecret perſuaſion that whatever were the temporary circumſtances of the man before him, his pretenſions in life were of no common kind;

kind; and gay, though undefined, viſions of future fortune and patronage ſparkled to his eyes. Siegendorf, who ſaw his purpoſe nearly accompliſhed, concluded his diſcourſe by ſolemnly affirming the jewel to be a memorial of his family, nothing but the laſt exigency could induce him to part with; and, valuable as it was in itſelf, he pledged his honour to redeem it at a future period with treble its price. That period, could either have looked into the future, they would have ſeen was never to arrive; but the argument was concluſive with his hearer: Idenſtein acceded at once; and nothing remained but to diſcover in what manner his ſervices could be rendered moſt uſeful.

In the diſcuſſion of the future, however, much embarraſſment ſtill aroſe; as the ſecreſy neceſſary to the occaſion was ſuch as rendered it extremely difficult for the Count

to quit M——, even with the connivance of Idenſtein. How far the advice of Conrad might have been uſeful, or in what manner his parents could have benefited by his interference, was alſo a ſubject of deep perplexity and care to the Count. It was neceſſary, however, ſo to arrange the plan with Idenſtein, that the ſervices of Conrad might not be eſſential in its execution, and to reſerve the liberty of changing it, ſhould a better occur; for Siegendorf had ſtill too little faith in his new auxiliary to put his ſon in his power by an indiſcreet diſcovery. He was moreover ſenſible that he could himſelf be but half in the power of Stralenheim, while Conrad remained unknown; and it was, therefore, of the firſt conſequence to conceal the relationſhip between them. After much inveſtigation, and many impracticable propoſals, the Count and Idenſtein at length ſimplified the plan of eſcape to ſo humble

humble a one as ſeemed likely to defeat ſuſpicion or danger. The latter engaged ſecretly to place a vehicle, of ſufficient ſize to hold Kruitzner and his family, in a ruinous outhouſe that ſtood not far from the palace, and had once ſerved as temporary ſtables. To this he was, at a proper ſeaſon, to add an able horſe, with ſuch little accommodations as would prevent the danger of ſudden delay on their journey: he engaged, in the interim, to amuſe the Intendant with fictitious accounts of the intentions of Kruitzner; to lull both him and Stralenheim into profound ſecurity; and, when the moment of diſcovery at length arrived, to baffle either inquiry or purſuit by every artifice that he could ſafely adopt. Such was the arrangement: yet, when made, it was difficult for the parties concerned, however fair the promiſes made on both ſides, to ſeparate without a mutual diſtruſt. The

Count could not in common prudence recompenſe his ally till his ſhare of the agreement was performed; and Idenſtein was not without a ſecret ſurmiſe, that when it was performed the recompenſe might be either evaded or withheld. In this, however, they were equally unjuſt; for the one had too much to hazard by treachery, the other too little to gain. Although the favour of the Intendant might ſerve Idenſtein, his reſentment could in fact do him little injury; for he had nothing to loſe but a character; and there were occaſions on which he had himſelf been diffident enough to doubt if he had that. He knew to a certainty that he offended no law, ſince he had never been legally employed. Had it even been otherwiſe, all the little juriſprudence of M—— was within his own hands; and, what was ſtill better towards his ſecurity, the Intendant himſelf had ſtrained the

power

power ſo often, that his diſcretion would hardly admit of his entering the liſts againſt an opponent likely to prove dangerous. All concluſions drawn, and all objections weighed, Idenſtein was, therefore, ſincere; and the communications he voluntarily made to the Count were of a nature at once to prove his ſincerity, and to point out to the latter that precipice on which he had juſtly ſuſpected himſelf of ſtanding.

The inundation which had continued to riſe, and which Siegendorf had at one time conſidered as the cruel finiſh to his ill fortune, he how learnt, from the report of Idenſtein, had been, in fact, the pledge of his ſafety. The latter could not, indeed, exactly aſcertain all the particulars that had been canvaſſed between Stralenheim and the Intendant; but he well knew that a meſſenger had that very day been diſpatch-

ed towards Frankfort, who had returned only from the impoſſibility of proceeding ſafely; and that the Baron waited, with the moſt anxious, impatience, for his departure on the ſucceeding morning. The meſſenger had, in confidence, communicated to Idenſtein, whom he knew to be truſted by his maſter, that his errand at Frankfort was to the commandant, and that he underſtood he was to return in company with a military guard!—All now then approached to a climax! and four and twenty hours would probably decide the fate of Siegendorf! four and twenty hours would defeat the ſchemes of his enemy; place him for ever, perhaps, beyond the reach of the latter, and finally reſtore all that was great and deſirable in life; or tear him from every thing dear there, and leave his ſon and wife to ſtruggle as they could, in order to preſerve for him that ſingle, ſolitary bleſſing!—His

mind

mind was rouſed to the encounter.—A generous and juſtifiable indignation awakened his feelings, and ſtrengthened his nerves. Tumult, irritation, and all the groſſer particles of his character, ſubſided for the time, and left a calm and ſteady ſurface, worthy of the ſon of Count Siegendorf and the huſband of Joſephine! To encounter his fate with vigour, and to bear it, whatever it might prove, with unſhaken reſolution, was the determined purpoſe of his ſoul! It is the wrong we commit againſt ourſelves that corrodes and moſt bitterly envenoms the heart; that we receive from others ſometimes diſplays its nobleſt faculties, either by the act of repelling or enduring the evil! Siegendorf owed half his faults, and almoſt all his miſeries, to a ſecret tearing conſciouſneſs of error, which he never permitted to riſe into reformation. In this caſe it was not ſo!—The inheritance was not the

right of Stralenheim: the means he purſued to obtain it were not thoſe of rectitude or candour:—the Count ſtood pledged to his family in an honourable cauſe, and he roſe, therefore, with the dignity of an honourable feeling to meet it.

The future now literally floated on the uncertain breath of a wind: for on the wind depended the continuance of the flood. It was during the courſe of the enſuing day that Idenſtein had engaged to fulfil his promiſe: it could not be uſeful to do it ſooner, and might be dangerous. Tedious hours were to intervene; and that fortitude the Count had ſo lately aſſumed was indeed neceſſary towards ſupporting them: yet even thoſe hours were to preſent a ſolace long denied to his heart and his eyes: for he was once more to ſee Conrad—his eldeſt born! the firſt pledge of love!—the blooming young man whoſe

whoſe features he had hardly yet had leiſure to trace, and whoſe noble and ſuſceptible heart he feared he had deeply outraged by the extravagant as well as indiſcreet exceſſes of his own!

Under this impreſſion it was hardly poſſible to preſent a countenance and demeanour more different from the morning than that with which the Count welcomed his ſon. He had even ſelf-command enough to controul his feelings, when he found his ſurmiſes confirmed, as he feared, by the reſerve of Conrad; and, by a powerful effort, he obliged himſelf to reſpect in the latter the feelings of a virtuous indignation. Conrad, like his father, was indeed naturally haughty, and but little accuſtomed to the high tone of rebuke: nor had he yet recovered from the ſurpriſe of the morning, and the contemplation on the characters of both his parents to which it

had

had given birth. That of his mother was plain, noble, tender:—a ſhort obſervation had taught him to comprehend and to reſpect it. It was far otherwiſe in what regarded his father: the firſt extravagant ſally of the Count, and the ſingular avowal it contained, had preſented to the imagination of his ſon the image of ſome bold and daring tranſgreſſor who ſtands aloof from ſociety, and deſpiſes its obligations:—it was the leader of a banditti that ſeemed to ſtart up before him under the name of a father; and every faculty of his ſoul had been rouſed to attention. Happily, as it proved for him, the fury of the Count had not allowed him to ſpeak at a criſis when theſe ſentiments would have betrayed themſelves; and, in continuing to liſten, they had gradually faded before the impreſſion of wounded pride and embittered ſenſibility expreſſed in the accents of Siegendorf. But no diſtinct image was

ſubſtituted for that which was effaced:—and though the words of the Count had ſunk deep into the memory and heart of his hearer, they ſtill left a ſtrange uncertainty in both as to the real character of that man, who, while he ſpoke with almoſt ſavage ferocity of deſtroying an enemy, could yet be worked up to agony by the eye of a ſon.

It was not, however, under the influence of a doubt, that Conrad could take his father to his boſom, or his confidence; and though he would willingly have ſuppreſſed what his features announced, it was eaſy to ſee that he came to ſcrutiniſe and to underſtand him. The Count was painfully ſenſible of this, and his mind ſtrove proportionably to aſſert itſelf. It was long ſince Joſephine had ſeen the ſunſhine of her huſband's eyes, and the ſnatches with which it now illumined his countenance

called forth all the brightneſs of hers. In the garb of poverty, under the roof of dependance, ſhrouded as it were in ſorrow and ſuffering, the native dignity and charms of both prevailed. They had now alſo leiſure to contemplate the manly beauty of their ſon; and their eyes mutually interchanged glances of applauſe and congratulation. The exterior of Conrad, though ſeen only by the imperfect light the fire diffuſed through their ſpacious apartment, was yet grand, commanding, impreſſive beyond even what that of his father had ever been. His perſon, though tall, was vigorous and full:—it ſeemed caſt in the mould of a hero, and had nothing to do with the common and every-day race of men. The contour of his head and throat was ſingularly powerful and ſtriking: it preſented that bold outline ſometimes formed in a moment of inſpiration by the chiſſel of a maſter, and which the connoiſſeur

connoiſſeur or phyſiognomiſt alike ſeizes upon as excluſively his own:—the ſtrength of the features was, however, ſubdued by the ſoft glow and flexible muſcles of youth: his mind and manners ſeemed in uniſon with this character of perſon, and had a tone of daringneſs and reſolution that beſpoke him formed for extraordinary enterpriſes. The Count gazed on him in ſilence; and a thouſand bright viſions of honourable diſtinction and happineſs, for ever annihilated in his own perſon, inſenſibly revived in that of Conrad. The gloomy preſent faded before the perſpective of the future; and, by the ſtrange but natural magic of the affections, Siegendorf taſted a few moments of a felicity ſo exquiſite, that nothing was wanting but the conviction that his ſon eſteemed him to render it perfect.

The brow of Conrad, though he ſtrove

to clear it, was, neverthelefs, evidently clouded by difquietude. Thofe various feelings created by the circumftances in which he had fo fuddenly found himfelf placed, had been confiderably augmented by the events which had paffed at the palace during his abfence from it. They were, he believed, of a nature once more to kindle the turbulent paffions of his father: yet the communication of them neither admitted of hefitation nor delay:—the moments were precious to all, and the neceffity of refolving moft urgent.

That half refolution which prudence had induced Baron Stralenheim to form with refpect to the robbery he had fuftained the habits of his character had not allowed him to fulfil: the time Conrad paft with his mother had unfortunately afforded leifure to the Intendant and the Baron for more open and familiar inter-

course

course than they had hitherto entered into; and, during this interval of mutual explanation, Stralenheim became satisfied that the man who called himself Kruitzner was in reality no other than Count Siegendorf. He felt no disposition, however, to communicate to his companion the importance of this discovery, or the advantage he meant to make of it. It would neither have been consistent with the discretion or the *hauteur* of his character, to elevate one of the Prince's domestics into the immediate confidant of his own projects or expectations in life: taking such measures as he believed would secure him the military assistance he desired from Frankfort, he left the Intendant, therefore, as much in the dark with respect to the grand secret as he had hitherto remained: but the subordinate one of the robbery, as being more within the province of the latter, he resolved to communicate. Stralen-

heim

heim was far from rich, and he loved money: the recital of his losses was not made, therefore, without some acrimony; and the jealous pride of the Intendant immediately took fire, as indeed the complainant had suspected it would do, at the bare idea of attaching disgrace to any of the household of the Prince. Something resembling altercation took place between them: each, however, believed it his interest not to quarrel with the other; and the disgust which seemed upon the point of arising on both sides was, therefore, according to their own ideas, happily subdued by their mutually fixing on an intermediate person as the object of distrust. The appearance and manners of Conrad threw it, indeed, wholly at a distance: but nature had not been so liberal to the Hungarian, and they, therefore, kindly determined that fortune should be equally unjust: he had, besides, that dangerous

and

and ſuſpicious ſymptom—poverty: and though the Baron and the Intendant might probably differ in their eſtimate of wealth, they were nearly at iſſue on one point—that a poor man could ſeldom be deemed an honeſt one. On the Hungarian, therefore, they reſted the whole weight of their ſuſpicions; and though the nature of the loſs did not admit of its being brought to proof, they treated him with an indignity that ſhowed they did not wait for it. It was at the critical moment of his humiliation that Conrad, after a ſolitary walk, re-entered the palace. What his feelings were on the ſcene he there witneſſed it was not poſſible for him to recapitulate to his father. His own ſuſpicions had, indeed, in the firſt inſtance, like theirs, fallen on the Hungarian; he had ſince learnt their fallacy! So ſingularly, however, was he circumſtanced, that it was not in his power to aſſert the innocence of the ac-

cuſed, though he knew it:—it was not in his power to quit the palace with him, and partake his fate, though he felt it to be unmerited: it was, unhappily, not even in his power to atteſt the general honour of his companion: for he had become ſuch by accident—was little known to him—had ſhared his purſe, becauſe he appeared to want it; and had no other claim but that of ſeeming above his fortunes.

What thoſe fortunes were, however, either the prudence or the reſentment of the Hungarian induced him obſtinately to conceal. He had retorted the indignities ſhown him with the determination of innocence, and the pride of a mind reſolved to reſt upon itſelf. Finally he had, without heſitation, quitted the palace, though he knew not where elſe he could find ſhelter:—for the caution of Siegendorf's ancient hoſt had not forſaken him, and he had

had neither room for poverty nor for the rejected gueſt of the Intendant. Under theſe circumſtances Conrad had left the Hungarian a wanderer in the environs of the town; hemmed in by the waters from leaving it, yet reſolved to encounter either peril or ſuffering rather than ſubmit to further degradation.—Such was the detail at length reluctantly given by Conrad, and ſuch the feelings of which the avowal was extorted from him! What were thoſe of the Count on hearing the recital! It ſeemed of late the peculiar miſery of his fate to have the cup of comfort ever daſhed from his lips at the moment he began to taſte its ſweetneſs.—Humiliation —the bittereſt regret—nay even danger appeared to be comprehended in this event! Again he was reduced to bluſh before his ſon and wife—again he looked back upon the paſt with grief, and upon the future ſtep it neceſſarily entailed upon him with

 apprehenſion.

apprehenſion. To receive the Hungarian under his own roof at a period when every thing likely to paſs there would be myſterious;—when his ſtay—his departure—his connexions, were of neceſſity ſuch as he wiſhed to bury in profound ſecreſy, was of all ſteps moſt hazardous; yet did it ſeem unavoidable; and there was even ſomewhat in the tone with which Conrad had uttered the narrative, as well as the penetrating obſervation of his eye, that ſeemed to ſhow him alive to the neceſſity of making ſuch a reparation for the injury inflicted on a ſtranger.

To counterbalance the many evils this unfortunate incident thus threatened, it was to be remembered that the very circumſtance of that ſtranger's being ſuſpected proved the Intendant's total ignorance of the private doors of communication: that the Hungarian would be no leſs anxious to quit

quit a ſpot that muſt be odious to his feelings than the Count would be to diſmiſs him! Finally, and in itſelf an argument more concluſive than any other, all that Baron Stralenheim could know with reſpect to his vicinity to the Count, he probably did; all he could do, he unqueſtionably would! Theſe reflexions paſt with the rapidity of lightning through the mind of Siegendorf; and almoſt at the moment of making them, he announced to his wife and ſon his intention of braving that danger to which he had himſelf expoſed the Hungarian, by receiving him under his roof. Joſephine pauſed over this. She, neverthelefs, felt, like her huſband, that ſomething was due to the innocence they had involuntarily wronged; and the opinion of Conrad, though not expreſſed, was not to be doubted.

The Count on his part now haſtily re-

lated the arrangement made between himſelf and Idenſtein. None more eligible, that could by any method be rendered ſecure, preſented itſelf to the imagination of either party: and as Siegendorf had calculated that he ſhould not be many hours on his route before he croſt the borders, there was reaſonable ground for ſuppoſing that they might then, without much riſk, remedy the inconvenience that would attend their mode of travelling. For this purpoſe Conrad ſupplied his father with gold, and the Baths of Carlsbad were appointed as the ſpot where he ſhould rejoin them.

Thoſe ſweet moments of repoſe in which all had indulged were now, as before, rapidly paſſing away:—they were even already paſt; and ſuch had been the tumult and perplexities attendant on their meeting that not one had been aſked of thoſe many in-

tereſting

tereſting and important queſtions each ſo earneſtly deſired to hear anſwered. To prolong the ſtay of Conrad was to direct ſuſpicion to him: and perhaps to involve him in that fate, which, ſhould it overtake the Count, he only could reſcue him from. That he would do ſo, natural affection aſſured his parents; that he muſt do ſo, the mere tie of ſelf-intereſt was ſufficient to atteſt: for even the ſhort explanation that had ariſen made it ſufficiently clear that without the perſonal appearance of the Count the legitimacy of his ſon would perhaps be ever conteſted. Yet his perſonal appearance, ſhould the meaſures of Stralenheim prove ſucceſsful, might, if not wholly prevented, be ſo long delayed as to give the latter that moſt dangerous of all rights, poſſeſſion. To obviate this, however, every ſtep had now been taken that caution could ſuggeſt; and the heart of Siegendorf, animated by the occaſion, poured itſelf out

with manly and inartificial magnanimity into the boſoms of his wife and ſon. Conrad liſtened with the deepeſt attention, and felt at length perſuaded, by his own obſervation, that he had miſtaken the character of his father; who, though the ſlave of paſſion, was not deliberately capable of thoſe actions it ſeemed to prompt. It was a doubt of the firſt importance to him to ſolve, and on which he had in conſequence anxiouſly meditated.

Half an hour had hardly elapſed from the departure of Conrad when the Hungarian entered. He was not entirely unknown to Joſephine, but ſhe had noticed him little when they laſt met. To the Count he was wholly a ſtranger; and the latter, who knew not exactly the degree of confidence placed in him by Conrad with reſpect to the relative ſituations of all parties, though aware that it muſt be a limited

one,

one, prepared to receive him with kind but cautious hoſpitality. He was not impreſſed favourably, however, by his appearance. The Hungarian was indeed devoid of thoſe exterior advantages by which his countrymen are generally diſtinguiſhed. He was low in ſtature and ſwarthy. His features were not plain, but their expreſſion was diſagreeable; and he had the air of a man who has ſeen and ſuffered much. His ſtep and deportment, however, were military; and, together with his addreſs, announced ſelf-poſſeſſion.

In the eyes of the Count and Joſephine, which had ſo lately reſted on the diſtinguiſhed perſon of their ſon, that of their gueſt appeared to a particular diſadvantage, nor could they avoid ſecretly feeling as if Stralenheim and the Intendant had not been altogether ſo wild in their conjectures as they had at firſt concluded. The

ſtranger

ſtranger juſt touched upon the peculiarities of his ſituation, and the inſults he had received, like one who felt them too reſentfully to be diffuſe: and he ſeemed beſides ſomewhat reſtrained by a doubt whether his hoſt had been made any party in the ſtory: on his own ſide he ſeemed to have received no further communication from Conrad than ſuch as might lead him to ſuppoſe the family before him had once ſeen brighter days. He profeſſed it to be his reſolution to depart early the next morning at all hazards: and the Count, who was ſecretly anxious that he ſhould, found, on reflexion, an additional motive for deſiring it: ſince, ſhould the Hungarian effect the journey, it would afford a certainty that the roads would be practicable for himſelf and his family. Joſephine now retired to reſt, and Siegendorf and his gueſt ſoon after parted; but on the nerves or the imagination of the former an

impreſſion

impreſſion had been made not eaſily to be ſhaken off: he was haunted by a ſtrange and vague ſuſpicion that the Hungarian, deſpite of all appearances, would, in the end, prove ſome ſecret emiſſary of the Baron, and that both himſelf and his ſon were duped into receiving as a gueſt one who was in fact only a ſpy. Unwilling, therefore, to truſt the general ſafety to a ſtranger, the Count continued to watch during the greater part of the night: ſometimes traverſing the room, at others meditating in profound ſilence, or attempting to read. Day-light at length ſurpriſed him: when ſoftly advancing towards the chamber of his gueſt he found him faſt aſleep.—Aſhamed of his own doubts he at length threw himſelf on the bed, and ſnatched a few hours of repoſe. It was conſequently not early when he awaked; and Joſephine, alarmed at his long watching the night before, as well as the unuſual ſeaſon he

had

had chofen for flumber, was anxiously near him:—to his great fatisfaction he found that the Hungarian was gone.

The foftnefs of the air and a bright fun gave favourable promife for the day. Before it was half over Idenftein made his appearance. He was in extreme good-humour with himfelf for having out-witted the Intendant; who, it was now clear, he thought, excluded him from the fight and confidence of Stralenheim. He announced to the Count the welcome intelligence that the inundation already began to fubfide; that there could be no queftion but before the dawn of the enfuing day the country would be paffable; and that the meffenger difpatched to Frankfort, angry at being again fent off on what he believed to be both a perilous and fruitlefs expedition, had, between his ill-humour and his hafte, forgotten the bag of difpatches—an over-

fight

fight which Idenftein had taken care fhould not be difcovered at the palace till it was too late to recal him, and which he, probably, would not difcover himfelf till he had completed his journey. Idenftein laughed heartily at the fuccefs of his own fchemes, and the lucky combination of circumftances that favoured them. Nor was he fparing of his expreffions of fatisfaction in thus balking the fulky Baron and his fagacious affiftant.

Welcome as this intelligence was, in all its points, to the Count, he was, neverthelefs, in no difpofition to enjoy it. As the moment of his own departure approached, he was worked up to a pitch of impatience he could hardly govern or endure. The period between the prefent hour and that of his journey was as a fort of "phantafma, or a hideous dream:" and the only particular he was truly anxious to know

was whether Idenſtein meant to fulfil his promiſe faithfully with regard to the vehicle and the horſe. This he engaged to do after the cloſe of evening, and he was then to obtain his reward. It was from that moment, therefore, the fears, the tortures of the Count were to be doubled!—for, the jewel once given, what ſhould ſecure the fidelity of the receiver?

Previous to the laſt parting between Conrad and his parents, it had been ſettled on both ſides that, to avoid all obſervation, he ſhould appear under their roof no more. It was, neverthelefs, his intention to remain within reach of the Baron, whether at M—— or elſewhere, till Siegendorf might reaſonably be ſuppoſed ſafe from purſuit. Nor would Conrad in this arrangement admit the poſſibility of hazard to himſelf, whatever the tender anxiety of thoſe he ſpoke to might diſpoſe them to

make:

make: and even the Count was obliged, after the ſtorm of his paſſions had ſubſided, to acknowledge that no probable reaſon could be aſſigned that ſhould lead Stralenheim to ſuſpect the ſecret tie and relationſhip of Conrad. Prudence had induced the latter to point out to his father the neceſſity of their re-union before either entered Prague. The neighbourhood of the Baths of Carlsbad had been fixed upon as the moſt eligible ſpot for this purpoſe; and Siegendorf, while attending there the approach of his ſon, propoſed to open a communication with the metropolis, to prepare the way for his own perſonal appearance; and to proceed forward immediately on the arrival of Conrad, with every circumſtance of ſplendor and family concord that could give validity to their claims. Such at leaſt was the intention announced by the Count:—but his inmoſt ſoul did not confirm it!

an ill-omened voice ſeemed inceſſantly to iſſue from thence, and to ſilence, with the force of preſentiment, every hope he ſtudiously cheriſhed. It was not feebleneſs of mind; or, if feebleneſs, it was confined in its operation to a ſingle idea:—for to all the accompanying ones he preſented an undaunted, and almoſt heroic reſolution: but he was ſecretly perſuaded that he ſhould never eſcape Stralenheim;—and he was right:—he never did eſcape him!

On the ſurface, however, every thing went well. The day continued fine; the flood obviously ſubſided; and ſoon after dark Idenſtein fulfilled his promiſe: ſo diſpoſing the horſe and calèche, that ſhould they, in the event, appear to have been left by him, he had reaſon to flatter himſelf that the Count's appropriation of them would rather wear the air of a fraudulent

dulent ſeizure, than a private convention of the parties. Siegendorf earneſtly ſcrutiniſed the features of his ally before he parted with the ring. He ſaw much fooliſh exultation in them, but no inſincerity: in fact, there was none to ſee. The moſt mature deliberation had not pointed out to Idenſtein any motive of intereſt ſtronger than that he was now purſuing; and he, therefore, as heartily wiſhed the Count gone, as the other wiſhed himſelf. He failed not, however, to make him reiterate his promiſe of redeeming the pledge at a high price, whenever occaſion allowed of his doing ſo, and of further rewarding the ſervice now rendered. On his part, he ſwore ſolemnly to the faithful performance of all he had engaged for; and, having received his recompence, walked triumphantly home—never from that moment to know peace, ſafety, or advantage, in its poſſeſſion.

He muſt be a deep diſſembler who evades all ſuſpicion in a heart and eye keenly alive to it. The Count felt, at length, ſomething like conviction that Idenſtein was no ſuch character. He had turned his ſteps, therefore, with a ſatisfied mind towards Joſephine, when the ſteps of ſome one entering arreſted his attention. He looked haſtily round, and ſaw, not without a mingled ſenſation of ſurpriſe and diſpleaſure, that it was the Hungarian. There was, however, nothing alarming attended the re-appearance of the latter, except in the circumſtance of his re-appearing at all. He profeſſed himſelf weary and exhauſted; and the account he gave of his abſence was ſuch as, while ſimple, wore the air of truth. The flood, though hourly ſinking, proved, upon trial, not to have ſufficiently ſubſided to enable a ſtranger to aſcertain the track. He had, nevertheleſs, made the experiment in different

ferent directions, and had in all encountered a degree of danger which had deterred him from proceeding; till being, at length, aſſured by the peaſants that a very few hours would allow him to accompliſh without hazard what it was evident would at that juncture be attended with much, he had given up the undertaking, and, putting his horſe in one of the numerous out-ſtables of his Highneſs, had returned, again to claim the hoſpitality of his former hoſt. He added, that he met Conrad not long before, who recommended to him the ſtep he had now taken.

In the round of poſſible events there was hardly any from which the mind of Siegendorf would have revolted more powerfully than from the ſimple one that thus preſented itſelf. He had conceived an invincible diſguſt to the Hungarian from

the very firſt moment he had ſeen him!—a diſguſt which he was conſcious originated chiefly in that ſenſe of humiliation the preſence of the latter could not but inſpire, by recalling to his memory the moſt diſgraceful incident of his life. He had ſtruggled vigorously againſt the injuſtice of his own ſuſpicions, and it was only a few hours before that he had ſmiled at their fallacy: they now at once recurred in full force. The very conſciouſneſs that they did ſo, taught him to ſpurn a feeling which he conceived to be as unmanly and degrading as he ſuppoſed it ill-founded. It was not poſſible, indeed, for him to conceal from the Hungarian that his appearance was unexpected, and, it might be ſurmiſed, undeſired: yet he controuled himſelf ſo far as to receive his gueſt with tokens of hoſpitality, and invited him to partake the frugal meal to which he was himſelf ſitting down. The Hungarian, who

who ſtood in need of refreſhment, accepted the offer. He was no talker:—but there was ſomething clear and impreſſive in his language when he ſpoke: and his voice, equally full and ſonorous, was of that ſort which the ear when it has once received never forgets. His remarks, however, as well as the general character of his mind, had a hardneſs peculiarly offenſive to that of the Count; and though it was eaſy to perceive that he had lived much in the world, and had obſerved cloſely upon it, the impreſſion he made upon his hoſt was not at all more favourable than before. Buſy imagination too ſtill pointed out ſomething particularly ſiniſter, alarming, and watchful in his eyes: yet the evil of admitting him, whatever its conſequences, could neither be remedied nor further guarded againſt. His diſcourſe betrayed that he was vindictive; and policy, therefore, no leſs than juſtice,

extorted from the Count all the exterior offices of courtesy. They at length parted. The Hungarian, as before, retired to rest; and Josephine, at the earnest intreaty and almost command of her husband, did the same.

But the power Siegendorf had exerted over her, he could not extend to himself. He continued to walk the ante-room till the watching of the two preceding nights at length stupified and overwhelmed him: when, throwing himself into a chair by her bedside, he gave way to what he believed to be mere momentary drowsiness. Josephine watched likewise for a considerable time, till her own eyes, which had involuntarily shared the vigils of his the night before, though he had not imparted their true cause, became heavy: the profound tranquillity of all around, and the soft breathings of her child, who lay on a

mattrass

mattraſs not far diſtant, united to lull her, as well as Siegendorf, to repoſe: her eyelids at length cloſed; and, in a few moments after, all three were buried in a deep ſleep. That of the Count, though apparently calm, was far from being really ſo. Confuſed images ſtill continued to flit before him with all the force of the moſt frightful realities. Stralenheim, the Hungarian, and even Idenſtein, alternately haraſſed his imagination:—the ſcene then changed; he loſt ſight of them; and, by a rapid tranſition, fancied himſelf within the limits of his own caſtle at Siegendorf. His father was alive there: but pale—meagre—hollow-eyed. On a ſudden the figure ceaſed to be really his father, and became a ſpectre. He would have avoided it—but it followed—it perſecuted—it haunted him!—In the midſt of theſe, and ſimilar chimeras, the Count ſtarted and awoke. The watch-light, which was more than

half consumed, announced the near approach of morning; and Josephine, whom his start had disturbed, awoke also; both instantly arose. Breathless with impatience, Siegendorf hastened to assure himself that the horse and vehicle were still under cover. All was precisely as he had left it the night before. He harnessed the horse with his own hands, and disposed their little baggage in the manner most commodious for travelling. Josephine meantime was preparing a scanty breakfast of pottage for the little Marcellin, when, at the moment that her husband re-entered the house, both recollected the Hungarian. The Count advanced towards his chamber-door: it was slightly closed, but not fastened. He looked in, and perceived with some surprise that his guest was gone. A moment's reflexion on the past told him that the street-door had been unbarred when he himself first descended; and a glance

towards

towards the future ſeemed to announce that the Hungarian was ſomewhere ſtationed to detain him. There was no leiſure, however, to pauſe over the myſtery: life or death—liberty or deſtruction—ſeemed to hang upon the point of time before them; and whatever might be the ſchemes that baffled or oppoſed their departure, the die was caſt—the effort muſt be made.

The moon in the interim had ſunk, and it was yet dark; the Count, whoſe anxiety for thoſe he was to guide, induced him to heſitate between the oppoſing dangers of precipitation or delay, once more quitted the houſe, to judge from the fading of the ſtars how near it was to ſun-riſe. He had gazed earneſtly on them for ſome moments, when, by their pale and uncertain light, he ſaw the branches ſhake in a part of the garden neareſt that of the palace: ſome looſe ſtones fell from the wall, and

and a man at the ſame inſtant was ſeen to leap it. Siegendorf advanced haſtily, but by the form and ſtep perceived that the intruder could be no other than Conrad. Touched with this proof of filial anxiety the Count quickened his pace; but he was ſtartled with the fierce demeanour and menacing geſture of his ſon.

"Stop!" ſaid the latter, in an imperious, though ſmothered tone, and while they were yet at ſome paces' diſtance, "Before we approach each other, tell me whether I ſee my father or a murderer?"—Siegendorf pauſed in aſtoniſhment; but unable to underſtand him, again advanced near enough to perceive that he was extremely pale and agitated beyond all common convulſions of the ſoul.

"Anſwer, as you value the life of either!" again exclaimed Conrad, motioning his father from him.

"Inſolent

"Insolent young man! to what would you have me answer?"

"Are you, or are you not, the murderer of Baron Stralenheim?"

"I was never yet the murderer of any man," replied the Count fiercely; and starting in his turn some paces back;—"What is it you mean?"

"Did you not last night enter the secret gallery?—Did you not penetrate to the chamber of Stralenheim?—Did he"—— and his voice suddenly faltered,—"Did he not die privately by your hand?"

The Count, who at length comprehended the horrible mystery included in his son's words, turned pale and aghast: while Conrad, bending distrustfully forward, gazed at him as though his very soul would

have paſſed through his eyes, in order to aſcertain the nature of the emotion his father ſuſtained. The wan and quivering countenance of the latter ſpoke a language not to be misunderſtood.

"You are then innocent?" ſaid Conrad, emphatically.—In terms fearfully ſolemn, the Count uttered an imprecation on himſelf, if his hand had ever executed, or his heart conceived, a project of deliberate aſſaſſination.

"Baron Stralenheim is, however, dead," continued Conrad, after a long and gloomy pauſe. "It is paſt doubt that his chamber has been ſecretly entered this night. Yet no bar has been forced—No appearance of violence is to be diſcovered, ſave on his perſon. His houſehold has been alarmed—the Intendant is ſtupified in a ſecond debauch, and incapable of exertion.

I, therefore,

I, therefore, took upon myſelf the care of ſummoning the police:—Nature and filial duty muſt plead my pardon if"——he ſtopt in a tone of ſtrong emotion. Siegendorf who in its imperfect expreſſion at once comprehended all the terrible ſtruggles that could not fail to ariſe at ſuch a juncture between nature and honour in a noble mind, agitated with the conſciouſneſs of his own degraded ſituation—the affecting contraſt of his ſon's virtues—the danger—the diſgrace—the infamy he ſaw prepared for them all, threw himſelf upon the neck of Conrad, and, for the firſt time in his life, wept bitterly. The language of truth carries with it an eloquence that is rarely doubted, and the Count read his acquittal in the eyes of his ſon.

"Yet you have no gueſts—no domeſtics—no viſitors," ſaid Conrad in a tone of rapid interrogation, as his mind ſeemed

ſtill

ſtill eagerly to revolve all the poſſible chances of danger from the fatally myſterious paſſage. Siegendorf ſuddenly ſtruck his hands together, and repeated the name of the Hungarian.

"He is gone!—He went yeſterday!"

"No!—he returned!"

"When?—At what time?"

"Laſt night!"

"And he ſlept——"

"In the only chamber I had to offer him—the laſt, and dangerous one!"—Conrad, without ſpeaking, made a haſty and impatient motion towards the houſe.

"It is too late," ſaid the Count ſtop-

ping

ping him; "you will only terrify your mother;—the Hungarian is gone!"

A deep and gloomy abſtraction ſeemed for ſome moments to impoſe ſilence on both. Conrad did not break it, but the unhappy Siegendorf in agony of ſoul at length loudly curſed that indiſcretion on his own part which had thus expoſed them to danger; and traced, though too late, in the hard and vindictive character of his gueſt, all the portentous warnings of a bloody cataſtrophe!—That cataſtrophe, bloody as it had proved, was paſt!—Stralenheim no longer lived either to ſuffer or to hope! It was Siegendorf who now ſtood the devoted victim! more ſurely ſo by the deſtruction of his enemy than by the bittereſt rancour of his life! Vainly did the removal of that enemy clear from his path the ſole obſtacle to honours and to fortune! Between him and all that he could

could claim, all that he could hope, a black and dreadful chaſm had opened, impoſſible as it appeared to paſs:—for where was he to find the Hungarian? How prove the crime upon him, or, when proved, exonerate himſelf from the charge of being at leaſt an acceſſary?

Conrad, through whoſe imagination theſe and a thouſand other difficulties and dangers were tumultuouſly ruſhing, yet ſaw, and pointed out with that vigour which marked his character, the favourable chances that remained. Obſcure and unknown as Kruitzner was, what individual at M—— was to ſuſpect in him the princely fortunes and hereditary diſtinctions of Count Siegendorf? Who could divine the connexion between his fate and that of the Baron? Who was likely, for a time at leaſt, to diſcover the poſſibility of Kruitzner's effecting the crime, or, when diſcovered, find a

clue

clue ſufficiently unequivocal to guide him through that labyrinth in which the ſullen pride and crooked policy of Stralenheim, together with the myſterious ſituation of his adverſary, had placed them both?—No letters had yet reached Frankfort—none would probably ever reach it:—for how would Idenſtein now venture to produce, what he had once ſo indiſcreetly concealed?—At the worſt, the Count's name in the diſpatches was probably a borrowed one; and what teſtimony was to prove the identity of his perſon?—Who was even intereſted in doing it? Stralenheim was an individual of but common rank in his own country, in any other he was inſignificant; on the ſpot where he had periſhed he was ſolitary. Law, palſied in its operations by the influence of circumſtances, would do little: juſtice and promptitude might do every thing: they might teach the innocent man to reſcue

himſelf by a vigorous effort from that ambiguous ſituation to which he was in danger of falling a victim, and place him as far out of the reach of any preſent enemy as fate had now placed him out of the reach of a former one. Every moment, however, became valuable! A dreadful reſponſibility was attached to Conrad, and each inſtant as it paſt threatened to make his ſtay fatal. Even at the period when he believed his father guilty, he had had the precaution not to expoſe him to ſuſpicion by entering his doors. The former ſtood now fully acquitted in his eyes, and to guard him was conſequently no leſs the duty of his juſtice than of his heart. The Count it was obvious therefore muſt fly, and that inſtantly: the means ſeemed providentially prepared. It was equally clear to both that Conrad muſt remain; ſince, by becoming the companion of their flight, he would at once have expoſed the connexion

between himſelf and his family, and doubled the danger of all: nor was he of a character to ſhrink from danger in any form; much leſs in that remote and doubtful one which attended his ſtay. The moment the ſecret doors of communication were diſcovered, as during the minute reſearches of the police they inevitably muſt be, Kruitzner and the Hungarian would alike become the decided objects of ſuſpicion. The active character of Conrad might yet find means to trace out the retreat of the latter; and ſhould his own relationſhip to the former remain unſuſpected, as there was every reaſon to conclude it would do, he might without difficulty ſo misdirect purſuit, as materially to favour the flight of his father. With a ſenſe of humiliation that could not but be painful, he himſelf pointed out this circumſtance; and was reduced, with whatever reluctance, to ſink the demands of a nice but ſavage honour

in the tender and indiſpenſable duties of a ſon.

Arrangements that have their foundation in neceſſity are almoſt intuitively underſtood: thoſe for the Count's journey had been previouſly made. A very few moments ſerved to decide all that remained; and hardly one was given to that embrace which each party painfully felt might be their laſt. Conrad a ſecond time named the baths of Carlsbad as the place of meeting, if they were indeed ever to meet again! —After which moſt earneſtly recommending diſpatch and vigour to his father, he once more leapt the wall, and Siegendorf once more found himſelf alone.—Alone indeed!—or rather in a horrible gloom, peopled with frightful and diſtorted images, which preſented to him the ſpectres of a guilty mind even in the moment of innocence. A ſingle quarter of an hour appeared

peared to have changed the poſition of every exiſting object, of every relative feeling!—He looked around, and hardly believed the ſame Heaven ſhone over his head, or that the ground was ſolid beneath his feet.—He looked within, and found it even more difficult to conceive that his enemy was annihilated: that all traces of him would ſoon be concealed from every human eye: that he lived only to his; and that, by an almoſt incredible tranſition, he was himſelf obliged to lament his fate! He began to feel that he ſhould now, indeed, never eſcape him; that a ſtrange ordination entwined their fates with each other; and that the grave muſt cloſe on both, ere it could ſnap the myſterious link of memory.

Joſephine, who had for ſome time anxiouſly waited the return of her huſband, at length came to ſeek him. At ſight

of her he ſtarted from the wild and tumultuous contemplation in which he had been engaged, and her preſence, like that of a ſpirit of light, ſeemed for a while to diſpel all evil. Snatching Marcellin by the hand, he now eagerly, though ſilently, led both towards their little vehicle, and placed them in it, where it ſtood in the road, ſheltered by the extremity of the garden wall.—The growing light of the ſun was juſt viſible on the tops of the diſtant mountains: the early cocks began to crow: every eye and every ſhutter as yet ſeemed cloſed in the town, when Siegendorf, at length, drove rapidly from it, carrying away with him confuſed images of blood, robbery, aſſaſſination, and diſgrace, which he had travelled many leagues before he could diſſipate.

The low and marſhy grounds of the neighbourhood were paſt with a celerity that

that did not permit them to ſee the dangers to which they expoſed themſelves. In proportion as they receded from the vicinity of the Oder, the traces of inundation, which had chiefly lain on the ſide towards Frankfort, diſappeared; and the road became progreſſively firmer. They had been before ſo cloſe upon the frontier as quickly to find themſelves beyond the boundaries of Sileſia; and the Count was well aware that the inceſſant hoſtilities which had long prevailed throughout the whole range of country, though now ſuſpended in conſequence of an armiſtice that was believed to be the forerunner of a general peace, had ſo ſhaken the very foundations of civil ſociety, that the intermediate links between each diſtrict were broken; and the police no where ſufficiently connected to reclaim any fugitive beyond a limit ſo narrow, that it was in all probability paſt. They already breathed the

purer air of the high-lands, and found the benefit of the increafing light: that facred ftillnefs with which nature in elevated regi ns feems to receive the new-born day, was calculated, in its conftitutional effects, to filence the irritation of the nerves and the heart. By degrees the foft lines of the horizon ftrengthened and became embodied: light fhade and colours fucceffively diffufed themfelves over the furrounding objects; and all was beauty and harmony, fave in the reftlefs imagination of the Count, and the anxious feelings of his wife. Jofephine who had ever at intervals continued to look back, on reaching the heights directed her eye, as far as its power could extend, to the whole tract of country around: it prefented one vaft and tranquil folitude, difturbed only by the foft undulations that fwept before the breeze. A faint blue vapour, which feemed to rife like fmoke from the valley,

and

and was juſt viſible between broken hills, announced, however, to her imagination at leaſt, the hateful ſpot where ſo much ſorrow and ſuffering had been encountered; and, with an eternal adieu, ſhe blended a ſigh at the recollection that it ſtill detained Conrad. Alas! how would her maternal heart have been wrung with apprehenſion, could ſhe have divined the circumſtances under which he remained!

Before the travellers lay the woods that bound Luſatia to the eaſt, and ſtretch in long and blackening ſhadow ſouthwards towards Bohemia. It was the intention of the Count to ſkirt theſe, and on entering Saxony ſlowly emerge from the debaſement and poverty to which circumſtances had ſubjected him. In the progreſs of his journey it was not, however, among the leaſt of his ſufferings that anxiety for the poſſible fate of Conrad would not allow

him

him to confide to the tender feelings of Josephine that gloomy secret which engrossed so large a share of his own: or even strengthen the belief he himself entertained, that the danger of pursuit had, from the moment of their departure, been far less than she suspected: for what individual, in the tumult and horror of those scenes which must immediately have succeeded, was likely to turn his attention to a being apparently so insignificant as Kruitzner?—*His* enemy was silenced! *His* pursuer slept in eternal forgetfulness of all he had so lately coveted—all he had confidently assured himself that morning's sun would secure to him! The Intendant, it was plain by the report of Conrad, was in no condition to take the directing power out of the hands of the latter: Idenstein had most probably shared his excesses; and, were it otherwise, had, by a conduct alike venal and worthless, inadvertently involved

his

his own fate so deeply with that of Kruitzner as obviously to render it more his interest to with-hold, than to forward, any cause of suspicion against the latter. There, nevertheless, yet existed one crafty and vindictive being Siegendorf believed he ought reasonably to fear; and whom, of all others, though to him his crime had been useful, he was most inclined to abhor: —it was the Hungarian; who, if yet lurking in the woods, might prove a dangerous enemy, because a desperate one. The Count was, however, not defenceless; for Conrad, previous to their last parting, had supplied him with arms.

The travellers at length entered upon the entanglements of the forest, and had no other guide than that the wheel-tracks formed by the peasant supplied. But though at a distance all had appeared dark and sombre, nature, at their nearer approach,

proach, put on a more ſmiling aſpect, and ſeemed to delight in contraſting that gloom with which the vices and miſeries of man had disfigured her. The ſun had long been above the horizon, and had diſperſed a thouſand fleecy though beautiful clouds that hitherto impeded his brightneſs. His rays ſometimes chequered the ground, and were ſometimes wholly excluded by cluſtered branches, that were yet only covered with the light foliage of ſpring. A rich and dewy moiſture lay on the underwood beneath; at intervals repoſing on patches of turf, that thus aſſumed the appearance of velvet, or ſwelled into large drops, which, trembling from the points of the leaves, ſparkled like ſo many diamonds. The air was perfumed with fragrance, and the thickets filled with numerous ſportive, but timid animals, ſeldom viſible to the eye, though they occaſionally ſcudded before it: while the birds, more

ſecure

ſecure in their airy habitations, anſwered each other in that delightful language which is at once muſic to the heart and the ear.—Joſephine, who in the contemplation of nature experienced a ſacred feeling, that, while it ſwells the ſoul with rapture, fills the eye with tears, laid her hand in ſilence on that of her huſband, and gently checked the ſpeed with which he was driving.

"For, over all, ſhe ſaw the form divine,
"The Uncreate, in the created ſhine,
"Bright as in drops of dew the ſun's reflected beam!"

The Count, ſtartled by the action, looked earneſtly around for ſome cauſe of alarm, and then at her. He had mechanically, rather than from any effort of will, continued to urge the horſe forward: he now looſed him, and gave him a ſhort but neceſſary reſpite.

Although

Although Siegendorf and his family could hardly be ſaid to enjoy ſafety in the foreſt, they yet encountered no poſitive danger there. The ſimplicity and meanneſs of their appearance offered little temptation to the wealthy robber, and from petty plunderers the athletic form, and undaunted eye of the Count, was in itſelf a ſufficient protection. As they approached the borders of Saxony, they frequently met light parties of troops who ſcoured the country: but though by theſe they were caſually reconnoitred, they were never detained, and they found themſelves at length decidedly within the territories of the electorate. Siegendorf, who was now familiar with almoſt every ſpot through which he was to paſs, judged no method ſo certain of confounding all perſonal identity as that of purſuing their road by way of Leipſig. It was near the ſeaſon of the fair, and a prodigious concourſe of

ſtrangers

ſtrangers were daily aſſembling from all parts of Germany of a rank and deſcription preciſely oppoſite to thoſe with whom the Count had ever aſſociated.—There was little probability that he ſhould be recogniſed by any one; and Joſephine was totally unknown. They, therefore, entered the gates of the city, in company with many others, at a late hour, and, ſtationing themſelves in an obſcure quarter, enjoyed a ſhort and ſalutary repoſe. From thence, ſlowly journeying forward through devious roads, they daily increaſed their comforts, till they approached Carlsbad; where, on arriving, all traces of the abject and impoveriſhed Kruitzner were finally abſorbed in the increaſing ſplendor and princely titles of Count Siegendorf.

*

The Count had not proceeded thus far on his journey without having found leiſure to weigh more maturely the danger that

that attended not completing it. He had now reached that ſpot where he had pledged himſelf to wait the arrival of Conrad: an event his heart eagerly panted for, but which his prudence ſuggeſted to him to be a ſubordinate conſideration to that of entering Prague. Various reaſons daily concurred to ſtrengthen this opinion: yet perhaps amongſt them that reſtleſs inquietude which ever agitates the human heart at the near approach of any intereſting ſtruggle, and diſpoſes it at all hazards to ruſh on to certainty, was not the leaſt. A communication the Count ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing with one of his father's friends, informed him, that no claimant to the family eſtates and honours had hitherto appeared. The total ſilence which had long prevailed with regard to himſelf, had, however, led to a general concluſion that he was no more. There was apparently, therefore, no reaſon to doubt but Conrad,

if on the ſpot, would have been the admitted heir. But the Count's correſpondent added that his ſon had diſappeared ſeveral weeks before the death of his grandfather, and that public expectation was at a loſs to decide, "Whether, from ſome peculiar circumſtances in which he was ſuppoſed to ſtand, the claims of the collateral branch might not be received in preference to his."

Siegendorf, aſſured that theſe circumſtances referred to the birth of Conrad, and alive at once to all the danger of leaving conjecture buſy with the name of either, perceived that his perſonal appearance alone could ſilence it. The occaſion was critical, and loudly forbade all delicacy or delay: yet could he not reſolve on re-entering Prague without experiencing a ſenſation that ſhook his very ſoul. The ill-omened hour in which he had quitted it

returned to his imagination in vivid colours; and a thouſand painful as well as humiliating recollections of the paſt ſtarted forward, to blend with a ſort of half-apprehenſion from the novelty and ſtrangeneſs of the future. He had no longer a father—hardly a country—ſtill leſs a friend!—expatriated as he had been, and ſhook as the nation itſelf was to its very foundations, he felt that he ſhould at beſt be recogniſed by it without being known—allowed without being claimed. Under this impreſſion, he entered the gates like a man who expects them every moment to be cloſed againſt him; till well-remembered and familiar ſpots once more ſaluting his eye, he at length began to breathe freely: to rouſe from that ſtate of agitation which for a while rendered all objects viſionary; to feel that he was ſtill the ſon of Count Siegendorf; and to aſſure himſelf that the ſorrow or degradation of the paſt was to

be

be ranked henceforward among thoſe fearful chimeras conjured up by the indiſcretion of youth, and which fade of themſelves before the ſeaſon of maturity. This was, unhappily, a diſpoſition of mind the Count was ever too much diſpoſed to indulge. He had a natural propenſity towards claſſing every error into which he plunged among the chances of the moment:—an inſignificant link in the great chain of human events; and well deſerving, therefore, to be ſnapt from it. The materials with which man forges his own fetters are ſeldom, however, of ſo brittle a nature!—but grievously as his had eaten into his ſoul, they had not yet changed its character: and, indeed, a judgment far more ſteady would probably have been ſhaken from its equilibrium by the ſudden tranſition to a ſtation ſo ſplendid as that which he was now entitled to demand.

Elevating and tumultuous as the ſecret feelings of Siegendorf became, the deep-rooted pride of his nature, nevertheleſs, enabled him to conceal them. His exterior preſented a man chaſtened, not ſubdued :—ſelf-governed, not humbled :—and who, in the reſumption of his rights, felt nothing ſo ſtrongly as his claims to them. The city was at that period riſing from its own aſhes. Repeated ſieges and pillage had reduced the inhabitants to deſpair, when the treaty*, which was on the point of being ratified, once more awakened all to vigorous exertion. The ſtates were ſolemnly aſſembling, and Siegendorf preſented himſelf before them like one ariſen from the grave. There was ſomething in the incident peculiarly in uniſon with the whole condition of ſociety. All that was great or illuſtrious had undergone a temporary eclipſe, and the hearts of men leant with

* The peace of Prague, ſigned May 1635.

indulgence

indulgence to every thing that looked like the reſtoration of order. Of thoſe nobles whom the Count formerly believed his enemies, many had diſappeared, as he had prophetically deemed they would, amidſt the political convulſions of the times: others, who retained only a confuſed recollection of the paſt, were ſtruck with ſilent reſpect at his appearance and demeanour: while the larger body, by whom the name of Siegendorf was habitually honoured, acknowledged, after little heſitation, the family lineaments and claims: the Count was received as its genuine repreſentative with a facility he had no reaſon to expect: its eſtates were made over to him; and he took formal poſſeſſion of all the privileges and rights of nobility.

The proudly cheriſhed hope of his heart, ſo long deferred, was then at length completed! Neither his own errors, nor the

resentment of his father, had defeated his fortune! Josephine, in defiance of all obstacles, was raised to that eminence on which he had so much desired to place her: Conrad only was impatiently looked for, to fill the void in his affections; and neither ambition nor avarice could covet any gift that did not present itself at the shrine of his pride!

Amid reflexions thus gratifying, the Count could not forget that two acts of self-humiliation yet remained to be fulfilled, before he could so discharge the past from his mind, as fully to enjoy the future. The gold of the miserable Stralenheim was cankering on his hands and in his heart. Both pride and sensibility imperiously demanded its immediate application to some pious purpose; and it was accepted with gratitude by the religious of a neighbouring convent. The person and character of

of the donor were not unknown there, and they believed that God was calling home to himſelf a penitent, whoſe licentious life extorted from him this atonement. —The ſecond act of duty, though not leſs indiſpenſable, carried with it a ſort of blended feeling from which he would willingly have ſhrunk, had decorum permitted: the ſelf-acquittal it ſeemed to promiſe, neverthelefs, induced him to fulfil it; and with a lingering and reluctant heart, he turned his ſteps towards the grave of his father.

Count Siegendorf had been buried in the great church at Prague; nor could his ſon ſee without emotion the ſimple monument dedicated to his memory; the ſole memorial of one, who, whatever his faults, had fondly loved him! A ſenſe of compunction irreſiſtibly obtruded as he remembered the paternal remonſtrances ſo often made

on one ſide, and the filial reparation ſo vainly promiſed on the other!—All was now over! his father ſlept in that quiet ſanctuary where no reparation could reach him, and whence no voice, ſave that of conſcience, ever yet iſſued to a ſon! The Count, after a confuſed and painful meditation of ſome moments, turned from the ſpot. He then ordered a magnificent piece of ſculpture to be placed over it; and the relative ideas, if not expelled from his boſom, were at leaſt blended with ſuch as more immediately intereſted him, when, on his return home, he found a billet from Conrad. It was forwarded from Carlsbad by the courier who had been diſpatched thither to receive either that or the writer, and announced the ſpeedy approach of the latter; communicating at the ſame time, in myſterious terms, the important intelligence that all had gone well ſince they parted.

The Count, relieved thus from the deep anxiety he had hitherto experienced with reſpect to the ſituation of his ſon, now prepared to reviſit his own patrimonial eſtates. Princely as they were, and defended by the vaſſals of the family, they had not wholly eſcaped devaſtation, though their vicinity to Prague had ſecured them from an evil more horrible than even war itſelf had inflicted. Arms were, indeed, no longer the ſole employment of Bohemia; but unhappily that licentiouſneſs which too often becomes the habit of a nation after any long and bloody ſtruggle had not ſubſided there. For more than twenty years all Germany had been a theatre of warfare and deſolation, where numerous hordes of banditti, lurking in the faſtneſſes of mountains, and in the receſſes of foreſts, were ready to pour down upon the weak or the unguarded. Mercenaries in the open field, it was not wonderful that in

private

private ſcenes of action, ſuch men ſhould become robbers and aſſaſſins. Yet veiling the atrocity of their conduct under ſpecious pretences, they frequently gave the name of Juſtice to the moſt bloody revenge: and in default of thoſe laws, to which indeed the circumſtances of the times allowed little efficacy, they executed their own verdicts with the moſt unrelenting cruelty. Nor were theſe exceſſes confined to the baſe or the ignorant alone: ſouls claſs themſelves; and among the higher orders of the community ſome ſtood ſtrongly ſuſpected by the ſtate of allying the human too cloſely to the animal nature; and of waſting in ſavage and ferocious pleaſures thoſe gifts which were beſtowed for the ſacred purpoſes of protection and kindneſs. The enormities of ſuch men had not even the common palliation of neceſſity to excuſe them: riotous, on the contrary, with proſperity and youth, their

their faculties, like ſome kind of plants, ſeemed to have grown rank by the very richneſs and exuberance of the ſoil on which they fell. From invaders like theſe no ſpot had hitherto been ſecure: they came no one knew whence: vaniſhed no one knew whither: and when they re-appeared, it was in ſuch ſcenes of ſplendor or force as ſuſpicion dared not invade. Their partiſans, as well as themſelves, were inviſible; and, like the cur who ſlaughters the ſheep in the night, repoſed ſleek and quiet at their maſter's door in the morning.

The caſtle of Siegendorf, covering a territory in itſelf, and equally ſecured by its bulwarks and neighbourhood to the metropolis, bore, however, no traces of a deſolation from the contemplation of which the ſoft and almoſt voluptuous character of the Count induced him to revolt with

peculiar

peculiar horror. His eturn there, at a crifis fo little expected, feemed to operate like a charm upon every individual within his eftates. Crowds to whom he was perfonally unknown haftened to greet him. Nature herfelf feemed to welcome his approach, and to put forth the lovelieft colours of her lovelieft feafon. Joy, acclamation, and an enlivening fpirit, purfued his footfteps: the young fpoke with generous indignation of the reports handed down by their elders; while the latter, to whom the exceffes of his youthful days were known, faw with delight and furprife the alteration time appeared to have effected. They admired the temperate dignity of his manner, the equanimity with which he entered again upon his former fortunes, and the fobriety of his domeftic eftablifhment: they were never weary of gazing on Jofephine and her blooming boy: the caftle was prefently filled with innumerable retainers;

together

together with all the pomp, civil or military, of a Baron of the feudal times; and it was at the c iſis of univerſal feſtivity that Conrad arrived to partake it.

The paſt, however, it quickly appeared, had not faded from the recollection of Conrad in the ſame degree it ſeemed to have done from that of his father: and his preſence, therefore, by an effect to others wholly inexplicable, at once chilled the glow of exultation and felicity in the boſom of the latter. The events that yet remained to be related by Conrad were, indeed, of a nature again to darken the imagination of both: however favourable in themſelves, they were, at beſt, but the winding up of a black and gloomy tragedy; and all the horrible ſuggeſtions that ariſe from blood yet unappeaſed inſenſibly preſented themſelves, and mingled with the detail. That reluctance the Count had

ever

ever felt to ſhocking Joſephine with it had been increaſed by his late habits of reſerve, and became almoſt invincible, when he reflected on the ſecurity and happineſs in which ſhe now repoſed. He himſelf learnt with deep, though uſeleſs, and therefore ſilent regret, that the Hungarian had eſcaped all reſearch. That the Intendant, ſtunned by the danger he apprehended from his own indiſcretion, had, for the moſt part, confided in Conrad, or taken ſuch feeble and undecided ſteps as were of little avail in the purſuit of the criminal. That Idenſtein, equally ſelfiſh, had even tacitly aſſiſted to baffle the meaſures he pretended to enforce, through fear of being involved in their conſequences. Finally, that the wretched Stralenheim—unknown, unlamented—had been hurried to an obſcure grave; and that vague depoſitions, lodged in the hands of magiſtrates little diſpoſed to intereſt themſelves in the fate

an alien, ſeemed all the reparation likely to attend his memory.

Selfiſh and proud as was the nature of the Count, there was conſtitutionally a ſort of tender point in it, which the mode of his very pleaſures and purſuits had contributed to increaſe. Myſtery and blood were offenſive to his imagination: yet had he ſo cloſely entwined both in his own fate, as to render it almoſt impoſſible to free his recollection from either. Nor was his pride leſs wounded than his ſenſibility, when he remembered that there exiſted a ſpot upon the globe, where, though he himſelf might indeed remain for ever unknown, his perſon was devoted to infamy; where the name he had borne would be deemed ſynonymous with robbery and murder; and where to be ſeen only, was to incur the penalty of the rack!

Theſe were particulars Conrad could not conceal: nor did the character of the latter appear gifted with the refinement that might have taught him to think it neceſſary to do ſo. The paſt ſtill ſeemed too ſtrongly impreſt upon his mind, to permit him to loſe ſight of it: and Siegendorf, who, in the tumultuous ſucceſſion of feelings incident to his own change of fortune, had loſt, for a time, the bitterneſs of retroſpection ſo long the habit of his heart, yet knew well how to allow for it in that of his ſon. Conrad, nevertheleſs, felt for his mother; and ſtrongly urged the Count to conceal from her a ſecret offenſive to the ſenſibility of her ſex, and which might encumber her with a thouſand weak fears, or ſuperfluous regrets, calculated to embitter the future lives of all. Siegendorf had diſcernment enough to trace in the tender conſideration thus ſhown by his ſon a proud repugnance to the avowal of thoſe degradations which

the

the circumſtances of his ſituation had obliged him to ſubmit to: but it was an allowable pride; it had yielded only to the ſafety of his father; nor could the latter reſolve to extort a farther ſacrifice from it: he, therefore, acceded to a reſerve he had never till lately practiſed towards Joſephine; and, with a generous, though half-ſullen tenderneſs, ſtrove to confine to himſelf feelings he yet found it would be impoſſible ever to ſilence;—the aching conſciouſneſs of a ſullied mind—a ſort of acceſſary guilt—and an indefinite remorſe!—Nor was this, alas! the only cankerous ſpeck upon the apparent proſperity of Siegendorf! a ſort of ſecret fore-knowledge, which is, in fact, only a nice calculation made by the feelings, before we permit it to become an operation of the judgment, already corroded that diſtinguiſhed lot fortune ſeemed to have prepared for him!

The employments of the Count had been hitherto ſo numerous, and his reflexions ſo much engaged, as to have precluded the diſcharge of various duties impoſed upon him by the nature of his ſituation. The rank he held in the ſtate, together with the favour ſhown him by the Imperial court, bade him hope for the higheſt honours either could beſtow: yet, alienated as he had been from his family, it was not poſſible for him to know what had been its views or connexions during his abſence, except by an examination of his father's papers. To the memory of that father the Count had not yet learnt to be juſt. The habitual reſentment he had permitted himſelf to cheriſh againſt him while living had even withered thoſe ſenſibilities which ſo often wait to ripen over the grave: and though, in returning to his native domain, Siegendorf could not wholly diveſt himſelf of local and tender recollections, the cir-

cumſtances

cumſtances ſucceeding his return had blunted their force: nor had he been deſirous to conceal from himſelf, that he retrod, with exultation, ſpots whence he had at one time believed paternal authority for ever excluded him; and triumphed in the conſciouſneſs of having vindicated his own rights and judgment. Hours of reflexion had ſucceeded theſe temporary tranſports; and had combined with ſome late obſervations to create a ſecretly agitating feeling, which impelled him to enter with the deepeſt intereſt upon the office before him: ſhutting himſelf up, therefore, alone in his chamber, at a late hour, he prepared to fulfil it.

In reviewing either the political or military tranſactions of his father, the Count found little intereſt, though ſome information. The party under which the former had acted was now wholly ſubdued; and

the latter, from the early bias of his life, rather than any juſt mode of thinking, had ever cheriſhed a decided preference for the Auſtrian cauſe, which the favour ſhown him by its leaders had conſiderably ſtrengthened. Paſſing, therefore, rapidly forwards, he fell upon ſuch papers as more immediately related to himſelf: they were of a nature to touch the moſt ſecret receſſes of his ſoul; and never had the occurrences of his early life been preſented in colours ſo vivid, or ſo touching, as in the affecting comments which ſolitude and affliction left his father leiſure to make upon them. He purſued the examination with ſtill increaſing intereſt as the dates grew nearer and nearer to late events. At length he reached that which aſcertained the exact period of Conrad's departure from the caſtle. The chain there ſnapt! But while the mutilated and imperfect fragments announced no reality, they left a field for

conjecture

conjecture refpecting the conduct of the latter, at once fingular and alarming. With conjecture, indeed, the Count had been before too bufy; but never had his imagination extended it to that fearful point which now indiftinctly prefented itfelf. A palpitation feized his heart: his head fwam, his eyes were darkened: by a violent effort he again attempted to read, but all that followed feemed confufion and myftery. His father had furvived many weeks—long enough, indeed, to convince himfelf that the defection of Conrad, which it was obvious he had in the firft inftance confidered as an infidious violation of the compact between himfelf and his fon, had, in reality, not originated in any feduction employed by the latter. That Count Siegendorf had in confequence of this conviction again written to Hamburg, to re-eftablifh the correfpondence and remittances there upon their former

 footing,

footing, was rendered ſufficiently clear by many annexed memorandums. Unhappily the dates of theſe ſecond letters proved them to have been diſpatched too late: they were among the laſt acts of his life, and reached not their deſtination till he for whoſe advantage they were intended had ſtudiously eſcaped all reſearch, and was on his way to Sileſia. The remaining papers of the afflicted and venerable parent tended therefore only to diſcover a broken heart—a heart deeply lacerated by his ſon, and finally broken by ſome inexplicable miſconduct on the part of Conrad. What an image to preſent to his eyes who was now in turn become a father, and who had already learnt to fear that he might not prove a happy one!

Awful were the phantoms which midnight and deep contrition united to call up before the imagination of the Count:

and

and it was at the very climax of his worldly profperity that the fpectre of confcience firft appeared to him. He banifhed it, and ftrove by a more regular examination of the papers to detect fome error that might at leaft difpel a part of his inquietude. His refearches were fruitlefs: every fucceeding memorandum but proved more incontestably that the fatal billet fent to Hamburg, which configned him to poverty—nay, in its effect, almoft to madnefs—had been written immediately under the influence of a refentment excited in his father by the defertion of Conrad; and that he had himfelf confequently owed to the imprudence of the latter in quitting Bohemia the moft afflicting calamity of his life.—Yet that imprudence, fatal as it proved, and fullied as it poffibly had been by errors of a lefs venial nature, was, at worft, in itfelf only the pardonable confequence of filial fondnefs and duty! at leaft thus officiously

argued the heart of the Count.—Aye indeed! Who teftified this?—Conrad! and *Conrad only!*—but his fubfequent conduct had confirmed it!—How? in what inftance?—He had adopted the caufe of his family:—Was it not his own?—By an effort of painful and humiliating duplicity he had extricated his father from difgrace: —Could any thing but his father's perfonal appearance at Prague have faved him from that of illegitimacy?—He had reftored the latter to his hereditary rights and honours:—Not fo!—he had indeed affifted in giving him liberty: or rather he had lengthened his chain. He had bound him by a folemn promife, which nothing but the exigency of circumftances had induced the Count to violate, to attend his own arrival at Carlsbad.—When that promife *was* violated, when Conrad *did* arrive, not at Carlsbad, indeed, but at the caftle of Siegendorf, and found his father invefted by

by the ſtate with unlimited poſſeſſion, did his countenance announce *his* ſhare in the general joy?—Did his voice riſe with the general acclamation?—Alas, no!—It was preciſely at that critical moment the Count had learnt to doubt. Conrad, ever meditative and ſilent from the firſt hour he had preſented himſelf to his parents, had on the ſecond occaſion, however different the circumſtances, manifeſted the ſame reſerve, the ſame abſtraction, the ſame haughty diſtruſt. He neither appeared to give, nor take joy: every eye had ſunk before his, and every voice had been huſhed into ſilence. Neither his youth, the grandeur of his perſon, nor that luſtre which attends the rights of an heir, had created any exultation at his preſence. Even the moſt indulgent of his parents had diſcovered that he was not beloved; and the feelings of both had ſecretly aſſigned the reaſon—he was not capable of loving.

But

But although the exterior of Conrad dazzled not the eyes of difpaffionate obfervers, the Count had now learnt to fufpect that it might too fuccefsfully have misled the hearts of Jofephine and himfelf; or rather that thofe tender hearts had been duped by their own fenfibility, and that the agitating moment of their fon's appearance at M—— had converted into an angel of light the being who fhone upon them amidft fuch a gloom. It was even becaufe he was not a hypocrite that he had, perhaps, beft deceived them: the character of his mind accorded too well with every circumftance of time and place; and when to fmile would have been to infult their feelings, was it neceffary to difguife his own? Such were the reflexions of Siegendorf; which, like a ftream fwelled by many fmall and invifible fprings, now fuddenly acquired the force of a torrent, and rufhed forward with irrefiftible rapidity. He ftill

held

held the papers in his hand; but he read them not—he ſaw them not. Queſtions which even in the boſom of miſery, and during their ſhort meetings at M——, had not eſcaped him, now paſt in tumultuous ſucceſſion through his memory. If Conrad really ſought his father, why was he found wandering ſo far from the track that ſhould have led to him? By what accident was a being ſo deteſtable as the Hungarian his aſſociate? and wherefore did he bury beneath an obſcure appearance his own name and condition in life? During the ſhort and anxious meetings that preceded the Count's departure from Sileſia, ſome cruelly impending evil had ever baniſhed thoſe intereſting ſubjects on which the ear of affection delights to dwell. The details of Conrad had neceſſarily been then conciſe and imperfect: there was even a ſort of anticipated pleaſure in permitting them to be ſo. The narrative of the paſt was ſuſpended

ſuſpended to enrich the future—to fill up many an evening of ſocial and domeſtic intercourſe with that innocent but exquiſite luxury which ariſes to tender hearts when they interchange their hiſtory and their feelings. Thoſe hours of leiſure were now come, but they had not brought the pleaſure which ſhould have gilded them. Conrad, after the firſt meeting between himſelf and his father, had been little at the caſtle of Siegendorf. His manners, when there, were forbidding; his communications cold and unſatisfactory: he ſought no intercourſe; he deſired no confidence; he delighted only, as it appeared, in ſuch ſports or exerciſes as withdrew him from his parents; and behind the more prominent features of his character a diſcerning eye might perceive ſome, which thrown, as it were, into dark ſhadow, inſpired an apprehenſion the more acute from their very indiſtinctneſs.—Alas! was ſuch

then in reality the darling ſon of Siegendorf; the promiſed comforter of his future life; the cheriſhed being on whom he had gazed in childhood, and ſo ardently deſired to elevate to that point where fortune in very malice had now placed him!

That Conrad was placed in a ſphere far beyond his mother's influence, Joſephine was alſo deeply ſenſible; but her affliction was little tinctured with ſurpriſe. The habits of her mind, unlike thoſe of Siegendorf, ever leading her to diſcriminate the ſenſations and opinions of others, created that nice perception of character to which he was a ſtranger.—By an effect therefore leſs of judgment than of feeling, ſhe quickly underſtood that of Conrad; and though ſenſible that there might have been hearts over which hers would have poſſeſſed an influence at almoſt any period of life, ſhe perceived his was not of that deſcription.

This,

This, with many other ſorrows, alike impoſſible to obviate, ſhe endeavoured to forget; or rather to confine to the ſanctuary of her own boſom: for Joſephine was no longer the creature of philoſophy and ſolitude. Agitated inceſſantly by the turbulence of Siegendorf's character, yet thrown back upon herſelf, ſhe had contemplated with an aching ſenſibility, and an obſerving judgment, that maſs of paſſion, inconſiſtency, and ſuffering, by which life is disfigured. Succeſſive conflicts had inſenſibly given to her own character a deeper, but a ſofter ſhade; and if it did not appear tinctured with ſadneſs, it was becauſe ſadneſs itſelf took the colour of reſignation. The firſt fond love of a virtuous woman's heart is, nevertheleſs, a tenacious ſentiment: hers, ſanctified by every tie, had ſurvived almoſt every diſappointment. In ceaſing, therefore, to feel with her huſband, ſhe had not ceaſed to feel for him; and the affections

fections ever in ſome degree reward themſelves, by the animating principle they create throughout the boſoms in which they are deeply felt.

Poſſeſſed as Joſephine was with the belief that Siegendorf's wiſhes were at length amply gratified by the reſumption of his patrimonial rights; that Stralenheim had withdrawn his pretenſions from a conviction of their inutility; and that nothing ſtood between the Count and all he could deſire of happineſs but the diſpoſition of his mind, and a ſhade of diſpleaſure towards his ſon, ſhe earneſtly ſtrove to correct the one, and to palliate the bitterneſs of the other. Magnificence, as far as it reſpected her own gratification, ſhe had never yet coveted. The firſt ſorrow that ever aſſailed her had been introduced by the remote proſpect of it; but ſhe believed it neceſſary to the fe-

licity

licity of her hufband, and, therefore, had rejoiced in the acquifition. It was confequently with furprife, as well as regret, that fhe faw its effect upon their different characters; and felt, that, while it elevated one, it depreffed the other. By multiplying her fympathies, and extending her benevolence, it indeed afforded her a new fpring of exiftence; while in him it feemed gradually to increafe the apathy of a joylefs and exhaufted heart.

Joylefs, indeed, was the heart of Siegendorf!—nor could either the fplendour of art, or the beauties of nature, fill up the void. To him

"The difenchanted earth loft all its luftre."

He had himfelf embittered the paradife around, and found it impoffible to banifh ideas that were his torment. The

The Count had quitted Bohemia in the fulneſs of health and vigour — every appetite and paſſion alike ripe for enjoyment, and impatient of reſtraint. Since thoſe days of inebriation, half the circle of life had revolved, and its irreſiſtible progreſs had placed him preciſely in that ſphere of exiſtence his father formerly occupied. Conrad now filled his. In all, ſave identity of perſons, they were the ſame;—too much reſembling in the tenor, though not in the features of their characters. But life no longer preſented to Siegendorf thoſe allurements which in early youth had rendered him indifferent to the value of the affections; and, from the moment he had regained Conrad, it had, therefore, been among the moſt paſſionate wiſhes of his heart to be beloved by him. This wiſh was, however, defeated by the very firſt meeting between himſelf and his ſon: for Conrad, it had been evident, from that mo-

ment, neither loved nor eſteemed his father:—the paſt, therefore, became a blank, and the future a field of anxious and fearful apprehenſion:—a melancholy, deep, ſilent, unconquerable, took poſſeſſion of the mind of the Count, as he continued to meditate on both: a melancholy ſo nearly allied to remorſe, as to find food for the latter even in what appeared only the common chance of circumſtances: for he inſenſibly began to perſuade himſelf that it communicated its influence to every thing within his circle: nor was the obſervation founded on chimera, whatever the application might be. His caſtle no longer wore the ſame aſpect of cheerfulneſs with which it had greeted him:—his native followers and retainers ſtrangely diminiſhed: their places were ſupplied by perſons unknown to him, and by whom he had no appearance of being beloved. The crowds that had returned to his eſtates with alacrity,

that

that had officiously ſought his preſence, and implored to be admitted under his protection, either fulfilled their duties with coldneſs, or ſilently abandoned them: the voice of joy was no longer heard, and induſtry no longer exerted itſelf: while even the domeſtic retinue paſt ſilently through the apartments of the caſtle, and ſeemed mutually to diſtruſt each other.

The mind and conſtitution of Siegendorf became ſhaken: and ſuch was the irritable ſtate of his nerves, that a thouſand wild, chimerical, and even ſuperſtitious fears, aſſailed him by turns. Was Slander buſy with his name? Did any ſecret whiſper from Idenſtein or the Intendant remotely purſue his footſteps?—Was the Hungarian at hand to plan freſh ſcenes of blood? Or did the ſpirit of Stralenheim walk abroad, to wither the proſperity of that man who had opened the door of murder upon him?

—Every method taken to trace the evil to its ſource, for an evil it too obviously was,—proved alike unſucceſsful. Superſtition did not, even on the minuteſt inveſtigation, appear to have peopled the caſtle within; no enemy threatened the perſon of the Count without; yet a ſecret and inexplicable curſe ſeemed to hang over its walls, and the miſerable Siegendorf was at length obliged to conclude that it was the malediction of a father!

Unable to controul or endure theſe gloomy ideas, the Count at length quitted his own eſtates, and fixed his temporary reſidence at Prague. He was received there by the miniſters of the Imperial court with a diſtinction eminently flattering to his public character, and which, if it afforded no real ſolace to his feelings, at leaſt diminiſhed their acuteneſs, and forced him upon occupations that expelled the eternal recol-

lection

lection of himſelf. He had now reached the maturity of life: and the intenſe thought that marked his features, inſenſibly impreſt thoſe around with the deference due to a ſuperior mind. Apparently devoid of arrogance or ambition, yet riſing gradually to every honour that could gratify either, he ſeemed to live, while yet in the world, like a man whoſe ſoul is already beyond it: and through an effect of that ſingular deception ſometimes produced by inviſible cauſes, thoſe who penetrated not beyond the ſurface ſoon accuſtomed themſelves to look upon Count Siegendorf as not only amidſt the moſt proſperous, but the moſt meritorious of the favourites of fortune. All hearts but one ſeemed to cheriſh and applaud him: yet to that only one, the eſteem of which he feared he had irrecoverably loſt, his invariably turned, with a tenacious fondneſs that was fated to be his ſcourge.

But while ſadneſs and deſolation thus reigned within the immediate circle where the Count had hoped to find joy, ſhe appeared to have taken up her reſidence where deſolation had indeed long prevailed. The kingdom, torn by a ſeries of fierce and bloody conteſts, prepared at length to enjoy the peace for which it ardently panted. The preliminaries, ſo long in agitation, had in the bare proſpect awakened the ſpirit of the people; and the ratification, recently ſigned, communicated that tranſport peculiar to a ſuffering multitude. A day of feſtivity was named: ſolemn thanks, and every ceremony religious or civil, were appointed to attend it; and man, in recovering a bleſſing of which he ſo often voluntarily deprives himſelf, ſeemed to believe he could want no other.

The rank and indiſpenſable duties of the Count called him early from his palace; though

though a fluctuating ſtate of health, and a deep depreſſion of ſpirits, little diſpoſed him to ſhare the activity he found abroad. At ſun-riſe every window of the city had been decorated with flowers or ſtreamers: frankincenſe from the cenſers perfumed the air; conſecrated images were offered with devout awe from hand to hand; and proceſſions of the various religious orders were ſeen paſſing in different directions. The attention of the multitude was, however, chiefly engaged by that of the States, which moved ſolemnly towards the great church, attended by the imperial and national guards, and compoſed of all that was moſt ſplendid or illuſtrious in the kingdom. Spacious as was the building, it was immediately filled. The nobles, the populace, youth — age — an immenſe concourſe, quickly haſtened in: the doors were then cloſed, and the hum and preſs of the multitude inſenſibly ſubſided to a low murmur:

—that ceafed!—every knee was bowed—every head was devoutly inclined downwards; while the various military bands played fome of thofe facred and almoft divine airs which fupply language to the foul when fhe faints under the want of it. Happy for each individual had this fentiment of devotion, fo grand and impreffive in the exterior, conveyed its purifying influence to the heart! That of Siegendorf was deeply moved. No word, indeed, efcaped his lips: but while the long here and hereafter paffed through his imagination, the filent and fecret afpiration they dictated was not unheard. From the pofture in which he had mechanically continued, the Count was at length roufed by the rufh of the multitude around, and the grand burft of the Te Deum. He arofe with the reft: when, cafting his eye, from the elevated fituation in which he ftood, upon the long though diftant line of hu-

man

man faces beneath, he ſuddenly fancied he ſaw that of the Hungarian amongſt them.—A miſt obſcured the ſight of Siegendorf, and a ſhock like that of electricity ran through his frame. So deep, indeed, had been the abſtraction of his mind, that the revulſion of the ſenſes was almoſt too mighty for his bodily ſtrength. By a vigorous effort he recovered his powers of perception, and again eagerly looked forward. But the crowd had in the interim moved toward the gates. The ſway and preſſure cauſed every ſpace to be immediately occupied by new-comers, nor could the moſt penetrating gaze aſcertain the place or features of an individual!

Thoſe turbulent paſſions, once ſo habitual in the character of the Count, now impatiently ſtrove again to burſt forth. Vainly, however, did he look above, around, below, for ſome ſympathiſing boſom, ſome

anſwering

anſwering eye, that could at once catch and comprehend all that his would have conveyed. Encumbered with pomp and empty diſtinction, he found it equally impoſſible to quit his own rank in the proceſſion, or ſummon Conrad from the diſtant one in which he was ſtationed. The train meantime continued to move on, and the Count was reduced ſtill to make a part of that pageantry to which both his ſenſes and his ſoul were alike inſenſible. It at length reached the river. The broad expanſe of the Muldau was covered with innumerable boats and veſſels, which diſplayed their ſtreamers to the ſun, and with inceſſant motion dazzled the eye by their brightneſs and variety. On the ſummit of the bridge, itſelf a ſublime and commanding ſpectacle, the elevated banners of the nation were ſeen to paſs, eſcorted by the younger nobility; while the thunder of their muſic, which, with a more

ſprightly

ſprightly movement, ſwelled above the pitch of that ſacred and impoſing ſolemnity it had ſo lately aſſumed, was now diſtinctly heard, amid the trampling of the populace, and the confuſed ſhouts of a multitude who at every pauſe rent the air with joyful acclamations!

Siegendorf, after vainly continuing to ſtrain his powers of ſight in ſearch of the Hungarian, reſted them, at length, on the helmet of Conrad, diſtinguiſhed by his ſuperior ſtature among the reſt; and though to exchange a ſingle glance was beyond all force of viſion, the anxious father darted his eye forward, as if by a ſupernatural effort he could make the perturbed feelings of his own boſom known to that of his ſon.

The name of *Kruitzner*, articulated preciſely at this moment, in that low, deep,

and deliberate tone which makes itſelf heard even amid general clamour, ſuddenly arreſted the attention of the Count. Without ſufficient preſence of mind to recollect that by recogniſing the name he identified himſelf, Siegendorf turned haſtily towards the ſpeaker, and within the diſtance of a very few paces again beheld the features of the Hungarian. He was not to be miſtaken. He wore the dreſs of his country, and fixed upon the Count a glance ſo worldy and alarming as cauſed the heart of the latter to ſtart, as it were, from its place, and involuntarily to ſtand upon the defenſive. Siegendorf perceiving him again about to eſcape among the multitude, ſtretched out his arm to detain him: but the ſtrong emotion of his own mind cauſed him at the ſame moment to ſtagger; and as the accompanying change of countenance announced an indiſpoſition that almoſt approached to ſwooning, the action

was

was miſconſtrued. The zeal of thoſe near made them preſs cloſely around; and before his powers of recollection returned he found himſelf dragged, not merely from the ſpot, but even from all probability of regaining it. The fact, was, however, indubitable: the recognition had even been mutual: and the Count ſaw a horrible and indefinite evil impending over his head, by the uncertain expectation of which life, and every good it could beſtow, muſt of neceſſity be blaſted. Of earthly goods, his honour and his eſtimation in ſociety were now become the deareſt; yet was it exactly thoſe, perhaps indeed thoſe only, of which the Hungarian might deprive him!—The unſettled but gloomy ſentiment that had ſo long haraſſed the boſom of Siegendorf, uniting with the tumultuous feelings of the moment, now roſe to a point of almoſt deſperate energy. He could not fly to Joſephine for ſolace. She was ignorant

of

of the dark and complicated hiſtory his recollections involved. The feelings of Conrad he had but too much reaſon to know rarely accorded with his. It was, nevertheleſs, to Conrad—and to Conrad only, he could venture to communicate them! Yet even this relief was denied; for the latter, though ſummoned, was many hours before he appeared.

The Count, meantime, ſolitary in the midſt of his palace, grew every ſucceeding moment more and more a prey to the irritability of his feelings; till nothing predominated but an unextinguiſhable deſire to appeaſe them by aſſuring himſelf at leaſt of the perſon of the Hungarian. To accompliſh this, however, required, apparently, a method and deliberation to which he was little equal: he choſe out, nevertheleſs, ſuch of his domeſtics as he could beſt confide in; and deſcribing with minuteneſs

nuteneſs the dreſs and figure of the man he ſought, enjoined them to make ſuch inquiries as might at leaſt aſcertain his purſuits and his reſidence. Their abſence was long, and their reſearches fruitleſs. The return of Conrad in the interim, earneſtly at it had been deſired, afforded little relief to the agitated heart of his father; who found it impoſſible to make him enter into the feelings by which he was himſelf actuated; and who even felt that he had no right to expect that he ſhould do ſo. Conrad, in remaining at M——, ſo long after the departure of the Count, had amply diſcharged all due to honour and to juſtice. It was Siegendorf alone who had ſhrunk from what either dictated. It was he who had deſerted the defence of his own rectitude; who had left to his ſon a painful reſponſibility, for which, as it appeared, no gratitude could reward him: an odious tax of duplicity and meanneſs, that had evi-

dently

dently debafed the minds of both, and created a fpirit of distruft and alienation time itfelf feemed unable to remove. Was it then the part of Siegendorf to refent that his fon could not fympathife with him? Ah! had he not much more reafon to regret that he had not earlier fympathifed with his fon?

While the Count was thus fecretly tortured by feelings which retrofpection and an inflamed fenfibility had long fince engendered, day infenfibly began to clofe, and the events of the morning were almoft driven from his thoughts by the deep and varied contemplations that engroffed them; when his domeftics, in announcing the requeft of a ftranger to fee him, at once recalled the whole. The Count, ftruck with a fudden conviction that he was on the point of receiving fome tidings of the man he fought, commanded, without hefitation,

that

that the inquirer ſhould be admitted: the folding doors were inſtantly thrown open by his attendants; and, to the utter aſtoniſhment of Siegendorf, the Hungarian himſelf appeared at the threſhold. He advanced a few ſteps, and then looked earneſtly around, with the air of a man who receives a deep impreſſion from the ſcene before him, though not exactly that of common or vulgar ſurpriſe. To him who recollected the circumſtances under which the parties preſent had before met, thoſe of the moment were indeed calculated to create a ſenſation not eaſily conquered.

They ſtood in the inner but moſt magnificent hall of the palace. It was of Gothic architecture, grand, ſpacious, and gloomy. The laſt rays of a weſtern ſun ſhot obliquely between the maſſy pillars, and gilded the trophies and banners of the family of Siegendorf as they were ſuſpended

around. The Count himſelf was at the upper end. He was ſplendidly habited for the ceremony of the morning, and the inſignia of various orders with which he had been inveſted ſparkled at his boſom. Conrad, ſo lately entered, had not yet thrown aſide the high military plume or the ſabre by which the younger nobility had been univerſally diſtinguiſhed; and the appearance of both was in ſingular contraſt to the ſimple, though characteriſtic garb of the Hungarian, who ſtood in dark ſhadow below.

"*It is Kruitzner,*" again repeated the latter, in a tone of ſlow and deliberate interrogation. The Count, who ſcorned longer to diſſemble, inclined his head with a token of acquieſcence. While Conrad, in aſtoniſhment at the ſcene, folded his arms, and, drawing near, fixed a ſteady gaze on the inquirer. The Hungarian

again

again looked around, as if, ſatisfied at length of the identity of the perſons, he was comparing what he ſaw with what he recollected: then advancing a few ſteps towards Siegendorf, with no leſs firmneſs than before, "Your people," ſaid he, "I underſtand, have made inquiries concerning me:—I am here!"—

There was a ſimplicity both in the ſpeech, and the manner of delivering it, that ſtaggered the Count. But he recovered his preſence of mind; and, by a proud effort, ſtrove to aſſume that ſelf-poſſeſſion which ſeemed to mark the Hungarian.

"It was by my order that you were ſought," ſaid he: "The monitor within will ſufficiently explain my motive!—You ſtand ſuſpected of an atrocious crime:—Acquit yourſelf—or prepare to attend its conſequences."

"I come to meet them:—Who are my accufers?"—

Siegendorf hefitated.

"The general voice:—mine in particular:—the time—the place—and every probability that authorifes either internal or prefumptive evidence."

"Did thefe attach fufpicion to no other name than mine?—Recollect well before you fpeak!"

"Prevaricator!" exclaimed the Count, roufed to his accuftomed pride and fiercenefs by the implied accufation,—"Of all exifting beings," purfued he, after an agitating paufe, "you beft can atteft the innocence of the man you allude to.—But I hold no other conference with a murderer than that which an overwhelming fenfe of

equity

equity demands of me. Anſwer directly to my charge."

"I deny the crime altogether!"

"Upon what ground?"

"Becauſe I know the criminal."

"Name him!"

"He ſtands beſide you!"—and he pointed to Conrad.—The Count who had rouſed his whole ſoul to dare the accuſation in his own perſon, recoiled ſpeechleſs and aghaſt. But perceiving Conrad ſtart forward to aim a deſperate vengeance at his accuſer, he threw himſelf without heſitation between them.

"Liar and defamer!" exclaimed Siegendorf. "This," he added, turning to his

ſon, " is indeed a calumny ſo monſtrous, that I was not prepared for it!"—The lip of Conrad was pale: his eyes rolled with a ſingular expreſſion; and there was that in his features which ſtruck a chord within his father's boſom that never yet had vibrated. He ſaw them convulſed, as they had appeared by ſtar-light in the Prince's garden at M——; and both the heart and countenance of Siegendorf for a moment fell.

" Count," ſaid the Hungarian, who attentively ſcrutiniſed the looks of the latter, " I came hither with no light or fluctuating reſolution.—Yet let me premiſe that I ſought not this occaſion; nor was it even poſſible for me to foreſee it. When I knelt with the multitude in the great church, curioſity alone attracted me thither. By what extraordinary calculation, indeed, could I ſuſpect that among ſenators and nobles

nobles I ſhould behold the forlorn and deſtitute Kruitzner? By what calculation ſtill more extraordinary could I gueſs that, under ſuch circumſtances, he would ever again deſire to behold me?—He *has* deſired it; and we have met.—Before we proceed further, anſwer me at once who profited by the murder of Baron Stralenheim? Was it the man, think ye, who became immediately after an outcaſt and a beggar? The Baron, *on that occaſion*, loſt neither gold nor jewels; it was his life only the aſſaſſin ſought; and that life was the ſole bar to a rich and conteſted inheritance!"

"Theſe," ſaid the Count, again fired by interrogations which he felt to be equally fallacious and inconcluſive, "are ſurmiſes that attach no leſs to myſelf than to my ſon."

"Be it ſo!—Let the iſſue light on him

amongſt us whoſe ſoul ſecretly acknowledges the guilt! It is to you only, Count Siegendorf, I now ſpeak. You are my accuſer and ſelf-created judge. Beware, therefore, how you incur the penalty of colluſive guilt!—I have ſubmitted voluntarily to your tribunal; and, remember, I demand juſtice from you, as you expect it either here or hereafter!—My narrative," continued he, perceiving the Count had no words to interrupt him, "will be long: it will include a period to the events of which you are probably a ſtranger, and an accuſation no leſs deadly to your peace than that you have already heard. *Dare* you protect me?—*Dare* you enjoin me to proceed?"

Siegendorf would have ſpoken, but his lips refuſed their office. He once more motioned with his head however in acquieſcence; yet was there ſomething ſavage and

and alarming in the tone of the Hungarian, at which his ſoul indignantly, though apprehenſively, revolted. Conrad, whom it ſeemed to have rouſed, awakened to curioſity by the whole of this extraordinary exordium, leant with an undaunted and contemptuous air againſt the pillar near which he ſtood. He had detached his ſabre from his ſide, and occupied himſelf in forming fantaſtic lines with it on the marble below. Now and then he half unſheathed it, and ſeemed curiouſly to examine its poliſh.

"I am unarmed, Count," ſaid the Hungarian, who kept a watchful and ſteady eye upon him:—"Command your ſon to lay aſide his weapon."—Conrad ſmiled diſdainfully, and, returning the ſabre to its ſcabbard, threw it ſome paces from him.

"Proceed ſafely," ſaid he: "the tale

will,

will, no doubt, be worthy of the relater:—but is it worthy of my father to liſten to it?"

The Count, who had recovered from the firſt ſhock of an over-anxious mind, and more deliberately weighed the dark and ſuſpicious character of the man before him, penetrated by this indirect reproach, extended his hand fondly towards his ſon in token of unſhaken confidence and love. The brow of the Hungarian changed: it ſeemed to be among his peculiar characteriſtics to analyſe exactly every tranſition of ſentiment in the boſoms of thoſe around him; and by an inſtantaneous impreſſion he felt that he ſtood on different ground both with father and ſon from that he had occupied a few moments before. His own purpoſe ſeemed ſhaken, and he pauſed for a conſiderable time before he proceeded further.

"It will be unneceſſary," ſaid he at length, "to enter into any detail that reſpects only myſelf.—I was thrown early upon the world, and am what it has made me!—Circumſtances induced me to ſpend the winter that preceded your arrival at M—— at Frankfort on the Oder. I lived obſcurely; but I occaſionally frequented the coffee-houſes and other public meetings, and I generally, therefore, knew ſomething of what was paſſing in the city. Towards the middle of the month of February a ſingular occurrence engaged attention, and formed the common topic of diſcourſe there. A military party had ſecured, upon the borders of Luſatia, a deſperate band of men who were conjectured to be marauders from the Auſtrian camps. It proved otherwiſe, however; for further inveſtigation left little room to doubt that they were part of a wanton and lawleſs banditti which infeſted the foreſts

forests of Bohemia, and whom either accident, or savage audacity, had carried beyond their accustomed haunts. Some among them were reported to be of distinguished rank, and military vengeance had been, therefore, suspended: they were escorted through different out-posts, and placed, at length, within the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates at Frankfort.—Of *their* fate I know nothing!"—Siegendorf breathed, but it was only to be doubly roused by what followed.—"The curiosity it had excited seemed suddenly to die away, or to be authoritatively silenced; and there was only a certain limit within which rumour still dared to whisper tidings concerning it, or rather to condense all in the wonderful report she gave of one man amongst them. His birth and fortune were said to be princely: miraculous stories were related both of his natural and acquired advantages: his person was exaggerated to something

ſomething ſuper-human both as to ſtrength and to beauty; his proweſs was deemed unrivalled; and his influence, not only over his aſſociates, but even with thoſe who ſhould have been his judges, was repreſented to be almoſt that of witchcraft. I had no faith in the influence of any advantage where the latter were concerned, but that of wealth; and I, therefore, concluded he was rich. My curioſity, as well as ſome other feelings, was excited; and I made it my employment to ſeek out this extraordinary and myſterious being. Such, however, was the awe he inſpired through the protection afforded him by the police, that though I ſuſpected many within my circle of knowing his perſon, none dared to identify it to me. I was left to the burnings of my own impatience, when by accident, and in the public ſquare, I encountered your ſon. It was a popular affray that drew us together, but it happened to

be

be one of thoſe ſingular occaſions when the human mind breaks looſe from the fetters of habit and ſociety, and betrays its character upon the countenance.—My eye no ſooner fell upon his, than I ſaid to myſelf "this is the man!" He was then, as ſince, with the nobles of the city; but I, nevertheleſs, felt that I was not miſtaken. I watched him long and cloſely: I compared what I had been told with what I then obſerved. I examined his perſon, his geſture, the varying expreſſion of his features; I noted down in my memory all thoſe minute characteriſtics which paſs unobſerved by common perception; and amid every natural or acquired diſtinction, I believed I diſcerned the feelings of a gladiator and the eye of an aſſaſſin."

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Siegendorf, who had "drank poiſons" as the Hungarian continued to ſpeak, ſtarted from his ſeat at the concluding ſen-

tence

tence with a deſperation almoſt approaching to phrenſy.—Not ſo Conrad! who, collected within himſelf, motioned to his father to be ſilent: and, turning full towards the Hungarian, prepared with ſteady, but intenſe curioſity, to hear the reſt.

"I now believed I had found the ſort of man I had long ſought; and having, by indefatigable perſeverance, at length gained circumſtantial information on this point, I waited my opportunity, and introduced myſelf to his notice. It was not difficult," added he, with a malicious ſmile, "to perceive that my attentions were undeſired, but I was not to be repelled: the more he ſtrove to diſencumber himſelf of me, the more I felt perſuaded of the truth of my own calculations. It was upon men like him that I had ſeen the leſs lucky or leſs daring of their fellow beings fated to depend; and I felt an ill-founded aſſurance,

as

as it afterwards proved, that I had discovered my point of fortune.—The nameless and inexplicable shadow that thus haunted the footsteps of your son soon became, as I believed it would do, a scourge and an oppression to him: but I grew at length familiar to his eye, and he seemed to understand my meaning. He was on the point of secretly withdrawing from Frankfort. I discovered this: our intercourse increased: my hopes increased with it: and though I could not fathom the motives of his irregular conduct, I learnt enough from his habits and education to doubt my own sagacity with regard to his real condition in life. Be that what it might, it was such as could not but be advantageous to mine: and acting under this conviction, I made myself, less I must confess by his choice than sufferance, the companion of his journey to Silesia. You are no stranger, Count, to the event that

rendered

rendered us mutually ſerviceable to Baron Stralenheim on the banks of the Oder; nor to the indiſcreet gratitude of the latter, through which we became inmates of the Prince's houſe at M——. How extraordinary! how memorable to all were the ſcenes that paſſed there!"

The Hungarian made a ſolemn pauſe; as if revolving within himſelf the manner in which he ſhould proceed. Conrad, with ſtern, but almoſt breathleſs impatience, ſeemed to attend the reſult; while Siegendorf, who in the frightful hiſtory of what paſt at Frankfort perceived an alarming connexion with the hints afforded by his father's papers, had hardly vigour enough left to rouſe himſelf to the laſt deciding teſtimony:—yet his heart ſtill beat fondly towards his ſon, and revolted from a being who, deſpicable even by his own confeſſion,

was ſtained with every evidence of circumſtantial guilt.

"Your ſtory is excellent," ſaid Conrad at length. "Proceed!"

"It will improve," replied the Hungarian, bitterly.—"Miſerable young man! You do not yet then ſee—you do not even yet then conjecture, the inviſible eye that was open upon your actions?—I was your dupe, indeed, at M——, for I began at length to believe you my friend.—You introduced me to your father: he was inſignificant—miſerable—degraded!—ſoiled with all the exterior debaſements of poverty: but I was not ſo new to life as not to ſee in him an extraordinary man. Through your means, or his, I became the victim of a diſgraceful calumny!—Woe to the worthleſs heart that inflicts on another

another the penalty of its own crimes!— Moſt heavily will yours rebound upon you both!"—As if rouſed by the acute recollection of perſonal indignity, the Hungarian poured out this denunciation in a tone ſo forcible as ſtruck to the inmoſt ſouls of his hearers.—"Such," continued he, after a momentary pauſe, "was the apparent diſparity of circumſtances between Kruitzner and yourſelf, as left it impoſſible for me to gueſs the nature of your connexion with him: but I quickly perceived there was ſome. I weighed—I calculated—I conjectured!—I knew too well the ground I ſtood upon with you, to ſuſpect you of real kindneſs or generoſity: wherefore then did you protect me from Stralenheim and the Intendant? Some unfathomable project—ſome dear and high-wrought intereſt was at ſtake: but it was evidently one in which I was to have no ſhare. I quitted the houſe to give you lei-

ſure to conſtruct it. I returned to mark its progreſs. The momentary prattle of a baby gave me to underſtand that his father had once been concealed in the chamber where I ſlept.—The ſecret then lay *there!* —Do you ſtart?" ſaid he to Conrad, who did indeed betray ſome emotion: "Now mark the end!—I returned to your father—obviously a moſt unwelcome gueſt; though I was yet at a loſs to conjecture wherefore. I met you on my way, and you urged me to remain under his roof another night. My ſoul half acquitted you of a ſhare in the myſtery upon this evidence of apparent frankneſs. I was yet to learn that you were the very maſter-dæmon, and moving ſpring of all; and that while you courted, it was for the purpoſe of plunging me into perdition.—Midnight came:—I aroſe, and, minutely examining my chamber, found I had divined the truth. My courſe of life had made me acquainted with

with the courts of princes, and the myſteries of their intrigues. Preſſing the ſpring of the ſecret door, I found myſelf in the gallery adjoining to it. Recollection of the Baron's loſſes, and the poverty of Kruitzner, then directed all my ſuſpicions towards him; and I was credulous enough to acquit you. I had no light, but an irreſiſtible curioſity impelled me forwards. Suddenly I heard a noiſe: it reſembled a groan; low-murmured, but diſtinct. I ſtopt—liſtened—turned every way to aſcertain whence the ſound iſſued:—but it was not repeated. In the attitude of liſtening I loſt my recollection, and knew not whether I had advanced or was retreating:—yet my hand touched the pannel of a door, and it was neceſſary to determine whither it led. My riſk was however evident. I drew back, therefore, only as much of the partition as formed a crevice; but my hair ſtood erect on my head, and my blood

froze in my veins, when through it I ſaw the body of Stralenheim!"

"But you ſaw not the murderer!" exclaimed the Count, in a tone of ſupernatural vehemence.

"He was not, at that moment, in the room: but the locks of the Baron's apartment had been changed chiefly under his inſpection the day before, and he had doubtleſs poſſeſſed himſelf of a maſter-key; for the door of the ante-room was ajar. I ſaw a man bathing his hands in water: their colour bore horrible teſtimony againſt him: at intervals he raiſed his head, and looked anxiously towards Stralenheim:—a lamp ſtood on the table cloſe by, and its pale but ſteady light then ſhowed me diſtinctly the features of your ſon.—Have I ſaid enough?" continued he, directing a penetrating glance towards Conrad; "or

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does a father's eye and heart want further confirmation?—Yet hear me to the end," he added, abruptly arreſting the attention of both, which he perceived was on the point of utterly failing. "Something, Count Siegendorf, is yet due to you!—you, who, in the firſt tumult and agitation of my ſoul, I doubted not to be an accomplice in the crime.—I ſaw myſelf at once its victim. I ſaw at once why I had been by him perſuaded to return; and I concluded that I had been purpoſely ſtationed by you in the ſuſpicious chamber. For a moment I heſitated upon my conduct; but I was unarmed, and no match at any time for your ſon in perſonal addreſs or ſtrength. He too had rendered himſelf the truſted friend of the Baron; I, at the beſt, had entered his chamber by ſubtlety and ſtealth.—It would be impoſſible to deſcribe the feelings with which I returned to my own. Joſephine and her babe were yet within

my power. I provided myſelf with the dagger which I wore commonly at my girdle; and had Kruitzner, by being abſent, confirmed my ſuſpicions, I know not what the bloody vengeance and deſpair that then poſſeſſed my ſoul would have dictated. But when I paſt through his chamber, and ſaw the watch-light dimly burning, while the family group was buried in a tranquil ſlumber, I exclaimed to myſelf—'Peace be with you miſerable innocents!—ye know not what the morning will awaken you to!'

"Self-preſervation now called loudly upon me; and hurrying from ſcenes in which I ſhould infallibly have fallen a ſacrifice, I concealed myſelf in the hollows of the mountains of Bohemia. I there learnt enough to aſcertain that all power was in the hands of the murderer: and, though by ſome act of, to me, inſcrutable foreſight,

Kruitzner

Kruitzner and his family had, indeed, escaped every thing but infamy, I could gain no further tidings concerning them. I concluded, therefore, that they had buried both their miseries and their poverty in some far distant country. Their sufferings, and my own experience, sufficiently warned me of the merciless character of the man we had to do with; and I finally withdrew from the neighbourhood. I lost sight of him altogether. *Him*, indeed, I never more desired to see:—yet my eye sometimes explored the habitations of famine and penury in search of Kruitzner. What then were my emotions, when I lifted it suddenly upon him in the person of Count Siegendorf!—what my conclusions, when a more minute inquiry gave me to understand the relation between him and Baron Stralenheim! Yet my soul acquits *you*, Count, of the crime.—Guilt sleeps not as you did, the night on which it was committed;

mitted; and it is upon the faith of that acquittal I ventured hither.—You now know the extent of the ſecret I am poſſeſt of!—*Conſider its value well before you diſmiſs me.*"

Siegendorf, to whoſe jarred and perturbed faculties the latter part of the Hungarian's diſcourſe had been nearly loſt, ſtarted with confuſed recollections, when the voice ceaſed to ſound in his ear. Alas! of what importance to the Count did his own guilt or innocence appear!—Conrad, a ſavage and a murderer!—Conrad, his ſoul fraught with horrors, and his hands dipt in blood, had been the only diſtinct image that for a time ſwam before the eyes of the ſuffering father!—Suſpicion or acquittal—wealth—honours—life itſelf, with all its various and fluctuating ſcenes, had given place to this horrible one. Abſorbed in the contemplation of it, the Count had, for a conſiderable

ſiderable period, loſt all ſenſe of identity, all power of judging or comparing. He was like a man in whom little more than animal life remains, but who ſtarts at intervals under the laſh of torture, and awakens to a frightful conſciouſneſs, from which he again willingly relapſes to ſtupefaction.

From this ſtate of mental inanity he was unexpectedly rouſed by the concluding addreſs of the Hungarian. The few words in which it was couched preſented a hope that ſeemed in itſelf the renovation of exiſtence. If the accuſer of Conrad were thus venal, Conrad himſelf was doubtleſs innocent!—Plauſible as was the tale, circumſtantially as it had been related, and deep as was its impreſſion, it reſted at laſt on the teſtimony but of one man; and that one among the moſt worthleſs of his ſpecies. Leaving behind every adventitious

circumſtance

circumſtance calculated to confirm his fears, the Count paſt with the rapidity of lightning to all that could diſſipate them. The firſt hateful impreſſion he had conceived of the Hungarian—the ſubſequent diſſimulation of the latter—the implied baſeneſs of his paſt life, the avowed meanneſs of his preſent, were all ſo many evidences againſt him. The laſt ſordid appeal was in itſelf concluſive! He who was to be bought was ſurely not to be believed! Believed, too, againſt whom?—a darling, an almoſt adored ſon, who, had he been even guilty, the miſerable Count felt too cloſely entwined with every fibre of his heart to be torn from it without agony.

Siegendorf, with that vehemence of feeling which ſees no medium between deſperation and ſecurity, at once clung to the latter. Yet while thus, by a violent effort repelling the worſt of his fears, a nu-

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merous train, ſufficiently alarming, though ſubordinate, ſtarted up to ſupply their place. In proportion to the villainy of the Hungarian, the magnitude of thoſe evils which ſurrounded the future fate of Conrad and himſelf would inevitably increaſe! —Both were in the power of an incendiary, who could torture if he could not cruſh; —who might ſo ſpeciouſly blend truth and falſehood, as to defeat the cleareſt judgment, and the moſt impartial heart;—who beheld, for the firſt time, in the ſplendid fortunes of the family of Siegendorf, an allurement to plunder, of which he had hitherto been ignorant; and who, like the beaſt that ſcents blood, would too probably be ſatisfied only when he has glutted. The imagination of the Count, now directed from that fearful image which had before ſwallowed up all the faculties of his ſoul, ſaw, in the cleareſt and moſt extended point of view, how much was to be conſidered—

how

how much to be guarded againſt! He threw an anxious and inquiring gaze on Conrad; but the latter, buried, as it appeared, in a reſentful and proud ſilence at the hitherto tame acquieſcence of his father, ſeemed willing to leave every thing to the hazard of the moment. Only now and then he meaſured the Hungarian with his eyes, as an enemy too daring not to excite aſtoniſhment. The extraordinary pauſe that had ſucceeded the narrative of the latter was at length interrupted by himſelf.

"Is it vengeance, Count, or juſtice, on which you meditate ſo deeply," ſaid he, with ſome ſurpriſe.

"Neither," returned Siegendorf. "I am weighing, he added emphatically, "the *nature* and the *value* of your communication."

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"The firſt needs no comment!—I will ſpeak to the laſt with the ſame frankneſs I have hitherto uſed. My life is a life of hardſhip and neceſſity—it is in your power to make it otherwiſe!—You are affluent, and rank high in the ſtate."

"I underſtand you!"

"Not wholly, if I judge by your countenance. You believe me venal, and are not quite convinced I am ſincere. It is nevertheleſs true that circumſtances have rendered me both.—Again I repeat—Conſider well before you anſwer me!"

"Dare you attend the event of my deliberation?"

The Hungarian heſitated, and caſt his eyes diſtruſtfully on Conrad, who was walking to and fro between the pillars. The

The latter raiſed his in return; but, disdainfully withdrawing them again, paſt on in ſilence.

"I pledge my life—my honour—my ſalvation for your ſafety within my walls," exclaimed the impatient Count.

"I have yet an additional ſecurity," replied the Hungarian, after a moment's meditation. "I did not enter Prague a ſolitary individual; and there are tongues without that will ſpeak for me, although I ſhould even ſhare the fate of Stralenheim!—Let your deliberation, Count, be ſhort," he added, again glancing towards Conrad: "and be the future at your peril no leſs than mine!—Where ſhall I remain?"

Siegendorf opened a door that admitted to one turret of the caſtle, of which he knew all other egreſs was barred: the Hungarian

Hungarian ſtarted, and his preſence of mind evidently failed him. He looked around with the air of a man who is conſcious that, relying on a ſanguine hope, he has ventured too far, and neither knows how to ſtand his ground nor to recede; Yet he read truth and ſecurity in the countenance of Siegendorf, although not unmingled with contempt. By an exceſſive effort of diſſimulation he, therefore, apparently recovered his equanimity, and made a ſtep towards the ſpot pointed out to him.

"My promiſe is ſolemn—ſacred—irrevocable," ſaid Siegendorf, ſeeing him pauſe again upon the threſhold: "It extends not, however, beyond my own walls."

"I accept the conditions," replied the other.—His eye, while ſpeaking, fell on the ſabre of Conrad; and the Count, who per-

ceived it did ſo, invited him by a look to poſſeſs himſelf of it: he then cloſed the door of the turret upon him, and advanced haſtily towards his ſon, who, with folded arms, ſtood buried in deep meditation.

"You have done well," ſaid the latter, raiſing his head at the near approach of his father, "to liſten to this man's ſtory.—The evil we cannot meaſure, we cannot guard againſt:—but it would be fruitleſs to temporiſe further—He muſt be ſilenced more effectually!"—The Count ſtarted.—"With you," purſued Conrad, drawing nearer and dropping his voice, "it would be unwiſe longer to diſſemble—His *narration is true.*—Are you ſo credulous as never to have gueſſed this?" added he, on perceiving the ſpeechleſs agony of his father—"or ſo weak as to tremble at the acknowledgment? Could it eſcape you, that, at the hour we met in the garden at M——,

M——, nothing ſhort of a diſcovery during the very act could have made the death of Baron Stralenheim known to any but him who cauſed it?—Did it appear probable," continued he, with the tone of a man who is ſecretly rouſed to fury by a conſciouſneſs of the horror he inſpires, "that if the Prince's houſehold had really been alarmed, the care of ſummoning the police ſhould devolve on one who hardly knew an avenue of the town? Or was it credible that ſuch a one ſhould, unſuſpected, have loitered on the way? Leaſt of all could it be even poſſible that Kruitzner, already marked out, and watched, could have eſcaped unpurſued, had he not had many hours the ſtart of ſuſpicion! I ſounded—I fathomed your ſoul both before and at the moment: I doubted whether it was feeble or artificial: I diſcovered it to be the former, or I ſhould have truſted you.—Yet ſuch has been the ex-

ceſs of your apparent credulity, that I have ever at intervals disbelieved its exiſtence!"

"Monſter!" exclaimed Siegendorf, frantic with emotion, "what action of my life, what ſentiment of my ſoul ever authoriſed you to ſuſpect that I would abet a deed thus atrocious?"

"Father, father," interrupted Conrad abruptly, and his form ſeemed to dilate before the aſtoniſhed eyes of the Count, "beware how you rouſe a devil between us that neither may be able to controul! —We are in no temper nor ſeaſon for domeſtic diſſention. Do you ſuppoſe that while your ſoul has been convulſed mine has been unmoved? or that I have really liſtened to this man's ſtory with indifference?—I too can feel for myſelf:—for what being beſides did your example ever teach me to feel?—Liſten to me!" he added,

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ſilencing the Count with a ſavage and alarming tone:—"If your preſent condemnation of me be juſt, I have liſtened to you at leaſt once too often!—Remember *who* told me, when at M——, that there were crimes rendered venial by the occaſion: *who* painted the exceſſes of paſſion as the treſpaſſes of humanity: *who* held the balance ſuſpended before my eyes between the goods of fortune and thoſe of honour: *who* aided the miſchief-ſtirring ſpirit within me, by ſhowing me a ſpecious probity, ſecured only by an infirmity of nerves. Had not your own conduct, by ſtamping you with diſgrace, and your ſon with illegitimacy, deprived me of all power openly to defy Stralenheim, and were you ſo little ſkilled in human nature as not to know that the man who is at once intemperate and feeble ſanctions the crimes he does not commit? Was it wonderful then that *I* ſhould dare to act what *you* dared to meditate?—I have nothing now to do with

its guilt or its innocence. It is our mutual intereſt to avert its conſequences. We ſtood on a precipice down which one of three muſt inevitably have plunged: for I knew my own ſituation with the ſtate to be as critical as yours.—I therefore precipitated Stralenheim!—*You* held the torch!—*You* pointed out the path!—Show me now that of ſafety; or let me ſhow it you!"

Siegendorf, paſt all power of replying, motioned to his ſon to leave him. But although the unhappy Count ſpoke not, that active faculty which, defying time, ſpace, debility, and every thing but death, combines, arranges, and tortures at the ſame moment, was buſy within. The extravagance of his indiſcretion, the exceſs indeed of his credulity, the blindneſs of his ſelf-love, all ſeemed at once to riſe in terrible array before him. Ever palliating, or fiercely vindicating his own errors,—

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ever ſhutting his eyes on the griefs or the temptations to which alternately they expoſed others,—he perceived too late the multiplied calamities created by ſuch a character, and the maze of inextricable miſery in which it had involved himſelf.

"Let us have done with retroſpection," ſaid Conrad, lowering his tone, as not wholly inſenſible to the effect his words had produced on his father: "We have nothing more either to learn or to conceal from each other.—I have courage, and partiſans who dare every thing. They are even within the walls, though you do not know them!"—Siegendorf ſhuddered. Alas! theſe then had been the ſubſtitutes for thoſe affectionate and innocent hearts whoſe welcome had rendered his return to his native domain, in the firſt inſtance, ſo delightful!—theſe were the baleful ſpirits before whoſe influence virtue and induſtry alike had withered!

"You are favoured by the State," purſued Conrad, "and it will, therefore, take little cognizance of what paſſes within your juriſdiction: it is for me to guard againſt diſtruſt beyond it. Preſerve an unchanged countenance. Keep but your own ſecret," he added, glancing emphatically towards the turret; "and without your further interference I will for ever ſecure you from the indiſcretion of a third perſon."—So ſaying he left the hall.

Siegendorf, wiſe too late for happineſs, yet felt the neceſſity of living yet a little longer to honour. Solemnly and ſacredly had he pledged his for the ſafety of the Hungarian: yet he could no longer doubt but the bloody purpoſe of his ſon was to deſtroy him. Nor was this difficult: Conrad, as well as his father, was furniſhed with keys that would afford an immediate acceſs to the oppoſite ſide of the turret: and circumſtanced as the Count now found

himſelf

himſelf even within his own palace walls, no certainty remained of ſaving the Hungarian but that of inſtantly liberating him. Siegendorf, actuated by an impulſe of honourable deſperation, not wholly unmingled, however, with an indiſtinct hope of ſilencing the accuſer, haſtily therefore tore the jewels from his boſom and hat, and mounted the ſteps. The danger that could thus alarm *him* was manifeſtly too imminent, the prize he offered too valuable, to leave the Hungarian room for heſitation. The few but gloomy moments the latter had already paſt in ſolitude afforded him leiſure to weigh all the hazards of an enterpriſe from which, in the temporary exultation of ſudden hope and aſtoniſhment created at ſight of Siegendorf, he had promiſed himſelf every thing. The acuteneſs of his penetration had indeed enabled him to calculate very accurately the character of the Count in ſome particulars; but the exceſs of paternal fondneſs had not

been

been included in that calculation; and he ſaw with ſurpriſe its operation upon his judgment. He began even to ſuſpect that it might in the end prove powerful enough to make him abet what his genuine feelings revolted from, and render him an inſtrument in the hands of his ſon to perpetrate that vengeance he had himſelf thus raſhly put within the reach of either.—Under theſe circumſtances the Count's admonition to eſcape was too perfect a demonſtration of the neceſſity for doing ſo not to be immediately complied with. The mind of the latter was wrought to a pitch that allowed him not ſufficient recollection to enter either into compromiſe or engagement. Blood alone was before his eyes; and from blood only he deſired to avert them, though at the expence of every future good in life.

The unhappy Siegendorf was found by his attendants, not long after the departure

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of the Hungarian, alone in the turret; ſtript of his jewels, ſpeechleſs and inſenſible. As it was not doubted but the ſtranger had plundered him, a ſtrict ſearch was immediately inſtituted after the latter. It proved vain: for the Hungarian ſatisfied with his ſpoils, or ſuſpecting that by an unwary acceptance of the jewels he had fallen into a ſnare purpoſely laid for him, was heard of no more. It was not true, however, that he had either injured or attacked the Count, whoſe frame had in reality ſunk under the ſtruggle of a violent convulſion; but Siegendorf was at no pains to confute an opinion, the probability of which ſpared him all further explanation: and Conrad, who alone ſurmiſed its fallacy, had, on diſcovering the flight of the Hungarian, immediately quitted the caſtle.

The internal anguiſh of Siegendorf, his ſmothered groans, his deep deſpair, together

ther with the extraordinary abſence of his ſon, quickly betrayed to Joſephine the ſource, though not the extent, of their mutual calamity. For the Count, happily as far as reſpected her, had learnt to controul his words: or rather the gloomy deſpondency with which he was oppreſſed, incapable of relief, bade him abhor all ſympathy. But the grief that thus ſtruck inward ſoon announced itſelf to be mortal: his exterior viſibly changed under the conflict; his eyes ſunk; his countenance became hollow: the never-dying worm ſeemed to have ſeized upon his heart. With health vaniſhed the pleaſures of ſenſe, and with peace thoſe of intellect. The voice of his wife was no longer muſic to his ear; and the ſacred hope it yet ſtrove to cheriſh was loſt to him. His boſom, like a ſullied mirror reflecting every image with its own ſtains, ſaw even in the form of the blooming Marcellin only the germ of depravity!

It was otherwiſe with the deeply afflicted but ſtill magnanimous mother: ſhe felt the reality of unblemiſhed rectitude in her own heart, and looked forward therefore with heroic confidence to the probability of its being perpetuated in that of her infant ſon. Her imagination ſhowed Marcellin imbued with qualities capable of rendering him an inſtrument in the hands of a beneficent God, to correct the vices, or alleviate the miſeries, of his fellow-creatures. She expected not indeed that, whatever his claims, he would find the world a ſtate of elyſium. She felt that, in his progreſs through it, he muſt often ſympathiſe with the unwiſe, and ſuffer from the unworthy: but ſhe knew how to calculate his reſources as well as his trials in this life; and cheriſhed that pious confidence in another, which alone enables the ſcale of happineſs to preponderate.

Whether Conrad and his father ever met again,

again, the ſpirits that have long ſince plunged into eternity alone can tell:—on this ſide of it they ſaw each other no more. A conſiderable period elapſed without realiſing the hopes or fears of the Count. Continuing during that time to meditate on the character of his ſon, it ſeemed like ſome hideous ſhadow, to grow blacker and more gigantic as he gazed at it. Having combined every particular related by the Hungarian with thoſe his father's papers had confuſedly announced and his own obſervation more perfectly aſſured him of, they formed a whole, alike frightful to his imagination and repulſive to his heart. Still linked, however, to this ſavage by the myſterious tie of nature, by the indiſſoluble regulations of ſociety, by the no leſs forcible though leſs tender bonds of family intereſt and honour, all of life that yet lingered in the pulſes of Siegendorf ſeemed to draw its nouriſhment from endleſs inquiries or conjectures reſpecting

ſpecting the fate of his ſon. They had hitherto proved fruitleſs, when his duty as a ſenator ſuddenly made that terrible demand upon his fortitude which the heart of the miſerable father had already deprecated. A ſtrong military force, acting under the orders of the ſtate, was deputed to extirpate a licentious troop of borderers that haraſſed the country on the ſide next Franconia. The Count, ere the fatal mandate was ſigned by himſelf, made every poſſible effort, even of the moſt dangerous kind, to aſcertain their number and their leaders:—unhappily he learnt both too late:—Conrad, whoſe ſavage and ferocious pleaſures had led him again to join his former aſſociates, had been cut down in a ſkirmiſh, together with many others, amidſt the receſſes of the foreſt, by the ſabre of an Auſtrian huſſar. He fell indeed undiſtinguiſhed: but living or dead there was no form like his, and it was recogniſed, as ſoon as ſeen, by the commanding officer.

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The final blow was at length ſtruck, and Siegendorf touched the extreme point alike of ſuffering and of exiſtence. A rapid decay had already enfeebled a frame that ſeemed formed for duration. In proportion as his paſſions had once been ſtormy, ſo had they now ſunk into profound ſtillneſs. Nor had his conſtitution vigour to cheriſh their habitual irritability: the arrow had gone deep into his heart, and the mortified wound ceaſed to be painful. Conſideration for the rank of Conrad, as well as for the affliction of his family, induced the State to conſign the treſpaſſes of the former to oblivion: it was, therefore, permitted that he ſhould be privately interred. The grave of his grandfather was opened, and the Count, deſpite of all remonſtrance, attended in perſon to ſee the hitherto diſcordant aſhes finally blended. After contemplating the ſcene with the gaze of one who ſtrives to look through it into eternity, he ſeemed to feel that all was

painfully

painfully expiated, and was conveyed from the ſpot—never more to reviſit it while vital conſciouſneſs remained.

The diſpoſition of Siegendorf's worldly fortune ſecured his wife and Marcellin thoſe honours to which the paſt life of the one, and the ſucceeding career of the other, well entitled them. But never did wealth or honours efface from the memory of Joſephine the huſband of her heart—its firſt fond choice—the dear and invariable object of all thoſe tender illuſions which ſanctified the period of youth and love! The emaciated form which hardly any other eye could recogniſe, became, even when laid in duſt, moſt precious to her recollection! The loweſt whiſper of a voice inaudible to every other ear was yet diſtinct to hers, as long as breath and pulſation allowed it to articulate a ſound. Breath and pulſation at length failed: the tran-

quillifed fpirit of Siegendorf was exhaled upon the bofom of his better angel: and though fent too late to teach him how to live, fhe fucceeded in preparing him to die.

The Count expired in the forty-eighth year of his age, and amidft the plenitude of all thofe enjoyments in which he had once fought felicity: yet, through a fingular chance, doubtlefs aided by afflicting recollections, precifely fix-and-twenty years from the day on which he firft quitted Bohemia. He was buried in the fame vault with his father and Conrad.—If the meafure of his misfortunes fhould appear to exceed that of his errors, let it be remembered how eafily both might have been avoided: fince an adherence to his duties at almoft any one period of his life would have fpared him more than half its fufferings.

THE

SCOTSMAN'S TALE.

CLAUDINA.

So ſhall I court thy deareſt truth,
When beauty can no more engage:
So, thinking of thy charming youth,
I'll love it o'er again in age.

PRIOR.

A MAN may travel a good many miles without meeting with an adventure. Nay, if he be a man of buſineſs, the chances are ten to one that he may never meet with ſuch a thing at all; except, indeed, it be a bankruptcy or a broken bone. The latter was near falling to my lot as I was travelling at my eaſe at the pleaſant pace of about three

 miles

miles an hour, in a commodious carriage compofed, I apprehend, of a certain number of planks clumfily put together by fome clumfy joiner, and fupported by two crazy wheels. This poft-waggon, as it was termed, drawn by horfes, one of which was blind and the other lame, feemed, at the rate we drove, to require fome ingenuity to overfet it. That bufinefs, however, was accomplifhed. I was picked up in no condition to thank my benefactors, as the blood flowed plentifully from a wound in my head, which, though it did not dispoffefs my brains, threw them at leaft into fuch a ftate of diforder as required fome hours of repofe to fet them right. There are indeed certain of my acquaintance who affirm that they never have been right from that time: but thefe are mere calumniators. My diforder fince has lain in my heart; and is, therefore, of a nature which only the infected can judge of.

The

The moment I thoroughly recovered my ſenſes I began to reconnoitre my ſituation. It was no bad one for a man who had been jumbled in ſuch a conveyance as that I had quitted, could the exchange have been effected with leſs hazard to my bones. I found myſelf in a neat bed, furniſhed with white curtains. It is to be obſerved that I always had a particular predilection for white curtains; eſpecially in foreign countries, for reaſons unneceſſary to detail. My chief attendant was a reſpectable, middle-aged woman, who ſeemed moſt kindly officious in aſſiſting my recovery:—but truth muſt be told; my gratitude was not ſufficiently juſt to direct itſelf principally to her, for I ſaw at different times ſeveral other females paſs and repaſs my chamber, ſome of whom were almoſt children, and the eldeſt of them not apparently above eighteen. They were all ſlight, blooming, and generally diſtinguiſhed by the bright

polished skin and fair locks, approaching the golden, by which the lasses of the northern hemisphere are mostly to be known.

As a Scotsman I ought to have admired this complexion beyond all others; but Scotsmen can sometimes be perverse: nay, though I know that the contrary has been maliciously asserted, they can even fail to be national. Among these pretty girls there was one then who appeared to me no less remarkable for the superiority of her charms than for the different character of her countenance. She had dark eyes, and curls of shining black hair fell almost into them over her forehead; while the longer locks were twisted up in a sort of tress infinitely graceful. Her features, I am told, were not altogether perfect: but for my life I never could get further in the scrutiny than her eyes: yet they were ungrateful eyes too! for they rarely, indeed hardly ever,

would

would meet mine. But when they did—
Oh then—

> "The large black orbs, filled with a ſprightly light,
> "Shot forth a lively and illuſtrious night!" * ———

From being over head and ears in the mire I was almoſt as quickly over head and ears in love. Yet not wholly with a face either: for my fair Swede, who by the bye turned out to be no Swede at all, ſpoke French; ſo luckily did I: and during the days of my convaleſcence the hoſpitable family, without diſtruſt or guile, gave me frequent opportunities to ſnatch converſation with any of the young women by turns. I muſt have been a monſter had I abuſed the confidence ſhown me. Not I mean by any decided act of libertiniſm; for I found them ſufficiently well educated and decorous in their habits to put that out of the queſtion; but even by ſullying the genuine purity of their

* Cowley.

minds with groſs flattery or worldly addreſs. My eyes and my heart, nevertheleſs, turned towards Claudina with that decided preference which makes itſelf alike underſtood either in ſimple or ſophiſticated life.

Thus agreeably circumſtanced, I took care not to recover from the effects of my accident too haſtily: nay it is not at all clear to me when that recovery would have been perfected, had not an anxious letter from my father, who was equally alarmed for the health of his ſon and for ſome particular commercial concerns, rouſed me from my dream of idleneſs and felicity. I well knew, in fact, that I had no buſineſs in Sweden at all. I had been ſent to St. Petersburg on an affair of conſequence to my family, and nothing but the levity and buſy curioſity of two-and-twenty had led me out of my way, to explore copper-mines and herbaliſe upon mountains.

The

The man who turns from his road at all, ſtands a chance of going much further than he calculates: ſuch was my caſe in every particular; and how to get into it again, in truth, I hardly knew. My letters had been forwarded to me from Ruſſia: ſhould I ſay I had remained there, or ſhould I acknowledge my wanderings? I choſe to diſſemble, and experience ſhowed me I choſe wrong. I ſent to my correſpondent at St. Petersburg ſuch letters as I wiſhed tranſmitted to England: I enjoined him faithfully to conceal my real abode, and I prepared to ſtay awhile longer with my hoſt and his charming family. To this arrangement, however, I had, as it appeared, nobody's conſent but my own: for the good man, who was a Lutheran prieſt,—frank, well-inſtructed, and a more ſtrict obſerver than I ſuppoſed him to be of the characters and feelings of thoſe around,—no ſooner diſcovered, by my diſpatching letters to St. Pe-

tersburg,

tersburg, that I did not intend yet to go thither, than the tone of my reception entirely changed. I ſhut my eyes, nevertheleſs, to this for ſeveral days, at the expiration of which time my hoſt invited me to walk after breakfaſt with him one morning in his garden. I had a diſagreeable preſentiment of what was to be the ſubject of our converſation, and I would, therefore, very willingly have declined it; but the thing was impoſſible.

It was a fine ſunſhiny day. Nothing could be more delightful than the ſcene. A balmy air juſt ſtirred the leaves of the flowers that were diſtributed around us; and the dew, not being yet exhaled, cauſed them to ſend forth that pure and exquiſite fragrance which ſeems the immediate breath of Heaven. The cottage of the paſtor was ſituated in a wild and almoſt ſavage country, the rough features of which, ſoftening

as they approached, preſented within its immediate precincts an image of tranquillity every thing ſeemed to realiſe. The ſea, like a broad blue belt, ſkirted the diſtances; and a good eye might even occaſionally catch the outline of the larger veſſels as they ſteered through the Gulf of Bothnia.

With all this flowery deſcription, however, which my recollection has ſince obtruded upon me, nobody could be further from reliſhing the beauties of nature than I was at that moment; at leaſt ſuch as then preſented themſelves to my eyes. To hear me, nevertheleſs, you would have concluded me an enthuſiaſt. It was impoſſible to ſpeak more fluently, or with more eloquence than I did upon them: I remember I was particularly inſpired upon the ſubject of bees, of which my hoſt had a large proviſion in his hives; and it was true that their ſoft, but buſy murmur, really contri-

buted

buted in no ſmall degree to the ſpecies of ruſtic voluptuouſneſs his garden otherwiſe afforded. I was even entering into an exact inquiry concerning their domeſtic economy and regulations, when my companion interrupted me.

"My good young Engliſhman," ſaid he, —which, by the bye, was a miſnomer, for I was a North Briton,—"I perceive you are very ingenious in evading the queſtion on which I wiſhed to ſpeak with you. But, with your leave, I muſt be permitted to obtrude it. It is evident that you are not diſpoſed to quit us; and I may tell you, without flattery, that I ſhall be no leſs ſorry on my ſide to part with you. There is ſomething of ſimplicity and nature in your character that pleaſes me. Unhappily, indeed, it is too natural; for you have ſtumbled upon an old-faſhioned error which the combinations of ſociety have almoſt exploded.

ploded.—You are fallen in love, as it is termed: that is, you have ſeen a pretty girl for whom you have a tender preference, and who indeed juſtifies it, as I believe her mind to be no leſs innocent and charming than her perſon. But have you conſidered what you are about? You are apparently a very young man,—dependent, if I underſtand you rightly, on your father: your country is at war with that of Claudina; and, were it even otherwiſe, it is extremely improbable that your parents ſhould ſanction your attachment to a young French emigrée who has neither family nor eſtabliſhment on which ſhe can rely. I know the Engliſh are a generous nation: but I alſo know human nature to be, under various modifications, the ſame every where; and I cannot, therefore, be of opinion that your choice will obtain the ſanction of your friends."

The

The diſcourſe of the good man opened a new light upon me. I ſpoke French fluently it muſt be owned; ſo too did all his family; but I had a true Britiſh accent, and my ear had not been nice enough, or my eyes had monopoliſed the power of my other ſenſes, to diſcover that Claudina was a native French woman. To my worthy friend's harangue I could only obſerve in anſwer "That young men ſeldom did conſider what they were about when they fell in love, or they would poſſibly never do ſo at all. That I had, beſides, been taken at an unfair advantage, ſince my ſenſes were not my own at the time; and that I verily believed they never would be ſo again, unleſs I were happy enough to poſſeſs Claudina. That he was perfectly right with regard to my dependance on my father; but that I was bleſt with the moſt affectionate parents in the world, who would not, I was perſuaded, be tempted by any conſideration

conſideration to deſtroy the happineſs of their ſon; and that, with reſpect to my future ſteps, it had been my intention maturely to conſider before I ventured upon them."

I did not pronounce the latter part of my diſcourſe ſo emphatically, or with half ſo good a grace as the firſt: for my conſcience told me that, to ſay the very beſt of it, it was but half true. Not, certainly, that I ſuſpected my parents of being willing to deſtroy my happineſs; but till fathers and ſons agree more exactly in what happineſs conſiſts, I am afraid the expreſſion will always be a little equivocal between them. My ſincerity was even more queſtionable in the concluding ſentence; ſince, far from having reſolved maturely to weigh my future ſteps, I had never looked into the future at all. My love was yet in its infancy; or rather in that progreſſive ſtate of the paſſion when the

the preſent is all-ſufficient to happineſs; when the new and delightful ſentiment is juſt awakened in the boſom, and has not yet given one ſingle jog to that long train of doubts, jealouſies, deſires, and diſquietudes, which render it ever afterwards ſo troubleſome. My hoſt, however, had done this buſineſs completely for me. From the very hour he and I talked together, I found that love was no ſuch ſport of the fancy as I had hitherto imagined, and I began, indeed, to look to the future with an anxious eye.

I preſently diſcovered that the birth of Claudina was noble: this I was ſorry for, becauſe mine was not. Her ſtory was ſimple, and, in fact, the hiſtory of thouſands. She had loſt her father, who had fallen a ſacrifice to his political opinions, at a very early period of the French revolution. Her mother, in eſcaping from France,

France, had been ſhipwrecked in her voyage to St. Petersburg, and, from the conſequences of fatigue and ſuffering, had ſoon after left Claudina an unprotected and impoveriſhed orphan. For this I was no leſs ſorry than for the circumſtances of her birth: for I ſuſpected that it would be my lot to be too opulent; and I began, like my good hoſt, to doubt the concurrence of my family in the ſtep I was meditating. My calculations on this head have proved erroneous however. It has not yet been my lot to be very rich, and it probably never will; but my mind is made to my fortune, and I do not envy thoſe who boaſt a more ſplendid one.

My firſt effort at thinking was not at all ſucceſsful. I ſaw no point on which I could reaſonably build; and I therefore grew fretful,—conſequently fancied myſelf indiſpoſed. I was indeed really ill for two

or three days. My hoſt perceived it, and inſenſibly relaxed the rigidity of his muſcles. What was much better, Claudina perceived it too; and I had the exquiſite happineſs of believing that I was not indifferent to her. Sweet, though tranſitory moment that enliven exiſtence, how precious is your recollection to a tender mind!

The firſt uſe I made of my returning health, was to impart to Claudina the ſentiments with which ſhe inſpired me; and I received from that grateful and generous girl ſuch a hearing as made an indelible impreſſion upon my heart. Claudina, however, was ſo entirely the child of nature, and ſo wholly unſkilled in the ways of the world, that to have conſulted her upon thoſe difficulties and probable inconveniences which her reverend guardian had conjured up to my imagination, would only have doubled them. She was, beſides,

not

not much more than ſeventeen, and had ſeen little beyond her mother's houſe and the walls of a convent. I was, therefore, thrown entirely upon my own fund of ſagacity and prudence: and, to ſay truth, when I conſider with how ſmall a principal I ſet out, I muſt confeſs myſelf, in the commercial phraſe, to have made no bad ſpeculation.

I learnt from Claudina that ſhe had a brother who ſerved in the army of the French princes, and whom her mother hoped to have joined at St. Peterſburg. She had herſelf reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe might learn tidings of him at the court of the empreſs, although the obſcure condition of the family with which ſhe reſided, and their diſtance from St. Peterſburg had rendered the vague inquiries they had hitherto been able to make totally fruitleſs. The opportunity it muſt be owned was moſt tempting

to a lover—a poor fellow who ſaw himſelf conſtrained to depart with a heart half broken, and a head not quite healed. I weighed ſecretly with Claudina the poſſibility of prevailing on her reverend protector to ſuffer her to depart with me in ſearch of her brother: it was plain that we were novices in the ways of the world, or ſuch a plan could not poſſibly have entered the head of either; but among the few peculiarities that marked the dear girl's character, and ſhe had none that were not graceful and becoming, was an anxious deſire to be reſtored to her family, and an opinion that ſhe had no right to diſpoſe of herſelf without the conſent of this brother; who, being by many years the elder, ſhe had been taught by her mother to look up to as the arbiter of her fate. She had, beſides, long felt that her continued reſidence in Sweden was a burthen on her benefactor, whoſe ſcanty income ill allowed him

him to exercise the generous feelings of his heart: and Claudina, brought up in affluence, had not yet been able to image such a genuine picture of poverty as should incapacitate her brother from receiving or maintaining her. Alas, she little knew the condition of many of her countrymen! I was not myself much better informed on the subject: and, to say truth, had I even been so, I fear I should have preferred the delightful idea of having Claudina my companion at St. Petersburg to all the sober objections that reason could possibly have presented to me.

We were not gone so far, however, in love or Arcadian simplicity as to conceive the idea of her accompanying me alone. Chance presented her a suitable protection in the society of a Swedish merchant and his family, to whom she was known, and who were to embark in the same vessel

with myſelf. After much heſitation then I ventured to communicate our mutual wiſhes to my kind hoſt. He looked extremely grave on the project, although I had dreſt it up in colours as ſoberly ſimple as fancy and love would permit me. I found an auxiliary, however, where I did not expect one—in the perſon of his wife; who, being a good economiſt, and a woman of no great expanſion of mind in other particulars, was not, I believe, ſorry to ſeize the opportunity of freeing herſelf from a perſon whom ſhe conceived to be an incumbrance in her domeſtic arrangements.

To be ſhort, the lovely Claudina was committed to my protection,—but under the ſuperintending eyes of a female Argus, who promiſed to watch carefully over her. On my part I faithfully ſwore either to place her in the care of her brother, or to

make

make her my wife, at every hazard of circumſtances, ſhould ſhe conſent to become ſuch without waiting his concurrence. In the interim I engaged to lodge her in the houſe of my own correſpondent at Petersburg, a reſpectable merchant, the regularity of whoſe family left nothing in the arrangement liable to objection, and where I was not to become an inmate myſelf. I was ſo truly in earneſt in all my declarations and plans, that I believe I left no doubt of my ſincerity in the mind of my hearer. Yet the good man was not quite ſure he was doing right in conſenting to our ſcheme, and I ſaw tears in his eyes as he embraced us previous to our departure. Claudina alſo wept: nor could I forbear ſhedding tears of ſympathy myſelf: though, ſuch was to me the joyful ſorrow of the moment, that I will not ſwear they did not ſpring from at leaſt a blended emotion.

 The

The clear beauties of a northern hemi-ſphere in ſummer are only to be known by thoſe who have witneſſed them. The ſun, hardly ſetting, left throughout the whole night a gentle twilight, which, illumined by the aurora borealis, preſented new and innumerable charms both in the heavens and the ocean. The merchant's family, Claudina, and myſelf, often ſat upon the deck during the greater part of theſe nights; and her ſweet voice, in uniſon with the voices of ſome other fe-male paſſengers, would frequently chaunt a ſort of national and ſimple muſic, ſo per-fectly harmoniſing with the ſcene before us, as to fill the ſenſes of every hearer with nearly equal delight. Never did the charm-ing features of Claudina appear to more advantage than when ſeen by this ſoft and ſhadowy light. For my part I almoſt wiſh-ed my whole life was to be a voyage; and was truly ſorry when we caſt anchor in the

the harbour of Cronſtadt. Here all was in contraſt to the tranquillity we had been witneſſing, and the buſtle of trade and ſhipping would have driven away almoſt any ſentiment leſs vigorous than love before the potent genius of gain.

Our plans at St. Petersburg were, I quickly diſcovered, in no immediate way to be realiſed. The traces Claudina had of her brother were ſo very imperfect, and ſo many changes had taken place in the diſtribution of the French regiments there, that it was extremely difficult to purſue our inquiries concerning him. I continued to make ſome, however; and, in the interim, I had now the double ſatisfaction of keeping in view the buſineſs my father had intruſted to me, and of enjoying daily the ſociety of the woman I adored. Claudina, on her ſide, was anxiously employed in acquiring the Engliſh language

and accent; and ſuch was the delicacy of her organs, or her ear, perhaps aided by the inſpiring influence of her tutor, that I have never ſince heard it ſpoken by any foreigner with equal purity. Although I had fulfilled with the ſtricteſt fidelity every engagement into which I had entered concerning her, ſhe was yet by no means ſatisfied with her ſituation. Not that it was any way objectionable on the ſcore of propriety; for ſhe had every protection and accommodation that could be demanded. She was beſides emboſomed in an affluent family, and had dreſs, pleaſures, in ſhort all the advantages that affluence itſelf could beſtow: but it was to me that ſhe owed them, and the delicacy of her mind taught her daily to revolt more and more from the nature of the obligation. Vainly did I repreſent to her that ſhe had received the ſame, at leaſt in the proportion of worldly circumſtances, from her former protectors;

that ſhe was, in fact, my affianced wife, and that all I could offer her would be only what ſhe had a claim to. Young as ſhe was, ſhe felt the difference of the relative ſituations; and ſuch was the ſoft and retiring propriety this conſideration gave to her manners, that though I complained I could not but love her the better for it.

But although Claudina was, on the whole, ſelf-denying and diſcreet in the extreme, ſhe was too gentle, young, and lovely, to be always proof againſt ſolicitation. I delighted in ſhowing her beauty, and I, therefore, took every opportunity of leading her into ſuch ſcenes of elegance as might diſplay it to advantage. The approach of winter in the northern courts is the ſignal for a ſpecies of feſtivity unknown in milder climates: and the amuſement of driving *en traineau*, is practiſed with a luxury and ſplendour that to a ſtranger is ſingularly

ſingularly dazzling. I was myſelf an expert performer that way, and, therefore, extremely ambitious of exhibiting at once my own talents and the charms of Claudina. She was, for a long time, averſe to this propoſal: I nevertheleſs extorted her conſent, and I provided an elegant traîneau, in which I placed my fair charge. Nothing can exceed the brilliance and gaiety of this kind of diverſion. Numberleſs carriages, fancifully ornamented, all in motion at once, and flying over the ſnow with the velocity of fairy cars, carrying their beautiful enchantreſſes along with them, form a *coup d'œil* altogether delightful. Claudina was in high ſpirits; nor was I leſs elevated, though I cannot impute even to the giddineſs of my pleaſure any blame as to the accident that followed.

We had already made our courſe, and were on the point of returning home,

when

when a more numerous ſucceſſion of carriages than before cauſed ſome ſlight apprehenſion from probable entanglements or embarraſſment. Among the traineaus that lately entered was one guided by an officer: the lady who ſat in it ſeemed, by the ſplendour of her appearance, and the rich furs in which ſhe was wrapt, to be of very conſiderable rank; and her conductor, with more zeal than ſkill, threatened deſtruction to every carriage that came within his vortex. Unfortunately mine happened to be of the number. I remembered my laſt accident, and I was not willing to try the thickneſs of my head a ſecond time. I was beſides anxious for Claudina's ſafety, and I therefore exerted my jockey-ſhip in making over the danger to my antagoniſt. I was but too ſucceſsful. We had a rude ſhock that threw us both into confuſion. On his part the danger was imminent, and it was the chance of a

moment

moment that both he and the lady with him did not ſuffer material injury. His reſentment burſt out into an intemperance of language I was not at all diſpoſed to endure. Our contention, therefore, ſoon amounted to little ſhort of defiance on both ſides. A general diſorder enſued; and, ſuch was the overbearing inſolence of my adverſary, that it would have been difficult to have foreſeen the event between us, had not a party of guards interpoſed, and put an end to the tumult. We were ſeparated; and I was, by authority, enjoined to return home.

Claudina, who had during this ſcene been ready to faint with fear, now drew great conſolation from a circumſtance which certainly afforded me none—that of my being put under arreſt within the houſe for ſeveral days. Her apprehenſions for my perſonal ſafety left her no ſympathy for the

the indignity to which I thought myſelf ſubjected. I was not ſo calm, though I found it neceſſary to ſeem ſo; and the firſt care of both, though for different reaſons, was to inform ourſelves of the name and rank of my antagoniſt. He was called, it appeared, the Count St. Victoire. Nothing more was neceſſary to aſſure Claudina that it was her brother.—St. Victoire had quitted his country before the death of his father: he was, indeed, among the firſt of that ill-informed or ill-judging part of the nobility who ſought ſafety or revenge in a foreign one. His ſiſter was at that time a child, and immured within the walls of a convent. The duties of the ſervice into which he had entered, as moſt of the young nobility of France were accuſtomed to do at a very early age, had not permitted him to be much at Paris; and ſhe had, therefore, ſeen him ſo rarely, that it was not at all ſurpriſing ſhe did not

recognife him, clothed as he was in furs too for the occafion, and under the circumftances of terror and agitation on her part in which they at length met.

The alarm I experienced on this discovery was little fhort of that felt by Claudina herfelf. Of all men living her brother was, perhaps, the one I would moft have wifhed to ferve: he was certainly the laft I would willingly have offended. Yet I felt that, after what had paffed, it would be difficult, to fay the leaft, for either to conciliate the good will of the other. There was fomething in the manners of St. Victoire that announced him at firft fight to be what he really proved; and I conceived from that moment an evil prefentiment concerning him. I left Claudina to take her own meafures in making herfelf known to her brother, and I waited impatiently to fee what would be the event of our

quarrel,

quarrel, as ſoon as it ſhould be aſcertained that my temporary reſtraint was at an end. This happened ſooner than I expected. On the ſecond day my arreſt was taken off; but an expreſs order from court forbade either of us to teſtify further reſentment againſt each other; and enjoined, what it was not in the power of any court to enforce, a total forgetfulneſs of the paſt. On my ſide I was obliged to enter into a ſort of recognizance that ſhould ſecure my obedience; which I was contented to do, as I found St. Victoire lay under a reſtriction from his commanding officer little inferior to mine. I had afterwards reaſon to know that the argument made uſe of to induce his eaſier compliance with what was required of him was the diſproportion of rank between himſelf and his antagoniſt. I was far from ſuſpecting this at the time; otherwiſe I am not ſure my

Caledonian blood would patiently have tolerated it.

While peace was thus apparently restored between us, Claudina had not been wanting in any effort on her part that might render it either permanent or ſincere. St. Victoire was at firſt greatly ſurpriſed at diſcovering his ſiſter, and much ſtruck with her beauty, as well as with the native charms of her character. The dear girl I doubt not ſpared no eloquence to make him a convert to mine: but ſhe was not ſo ſucceſsful as, I will venture proudly to ſay, ſhe deſerved to be. St. Victoire could not indeed deny that I appeared to have acted both generously and delicately towards his ſiſter; but he took care to invalidate the merit of my conduct by repreſenting the probability of its proving, in the end, to be either uncertain, or inſidious. I burnt

with

with reſentment; but I had no reſource. I could not again embroil myſelf with the brother of Claudina; and had I done ſo, I ſhould not have remedied my misfortune: for although ſhe lamented his injuſtice as much as I did, ſhe could not be prevailed upon abſolutely to revolt from his authority. She was beſides much under age, and had no power, either according to the regulations of her own country, or of thoſe in which ſhe reſided, to ſet him at defiance. —And now I believe we both bitterly regretted Sweden, our good old friend there, and the tranquil happineſs we had enjoyed under his roof. St. Victoire, however, after ſome days of deliberation, conſtrained himſelf to render me perſonal thanks for the protection I had afforded his ſiſter. He did it ſo proudly as to convince me that he meant to diſcharge both himſelf and her from the obligation: but I had not much leiſure to ruminate upon his intentions, for

he prefently announced to me "that Claudina was now become his care: that it was his purpofe immediately to remove her from the *very refpectable* hands in which I had placed her, to a fituation more fuitable to her country and her condition in life: that he fhould be very happy to acknowledge my civilities in every mode that lay in his power; and he hinted at any pecuniary demands which I might be entitled to make." This put me out of all patience. I knew him to be poor; and I believed myfelf to be rich enough to have bought half his regiment: but it was not the queftion of poverty or riches that lay between us: honour, fenfibility, and every thing dear to a noble mind, was included in it.

I told him plainly, and at once, the mutual engagements that fubfifted between myfelf and Claudina. I profeffed before Heaven there was no affluence I could

have

have offered that deſerving and lovely girl which I ſhould have thought equal to her merits; but I could not conquer myſelf ſo far as to forbear adverting with diſdain to the pecuniary indemnification hinted at in his ſpeech, whether I conſidered the offer merely, or the reſources of him who offered it.—I concluded with a proteſtation that nothing ſhould tear Claudina from me; and I referred him to herſelf, to know whether ſhe would be prevailed upon to give me up.

I had now made things a thouſand times worſe than they were before. St. Victoire commanded his pride, indeed, ſo far as to anſwer me in terms of decent civility; but I could eaſily perceive that I had exaſperated and nettled him to the very ſoul. He made extremely light of my reference to his ſiſter; affecting to conſider her as a child who was incompetent to judge of

her own wiſhes. He gave me very clearly to underſtand that he had influence enough at court to defeat any I might flatter myſelf with poſſeſſing; and very civilly inſinuated that the ſon of a merchant could never, under any circumſtances either of wealth or poverty, be a match for the ſiſter of the Count St. Victoire.—Nothing more could be made of our conference, unleſs it had come to a ſerious and hoſtile appeal; which, for various reaſons, each was unwilling it ſhould do. We parted mutually out of humour, and mutually reſolved to carry the future our own way.

Claudina was overwhelmed with grief when ſhe learnt the event of our converſation. Both ſhe and I had been ſo deficient in knowledge of the world, and ſo little uſed to calculate the various points of view in which circumſtances appear to various characters, that it had never at any moment

occurred

occurred to either of us to doubt our reception from her brother, or his approbation of the meaſures we had purſued. How great then was our diſappointment to find the event we had ſo much deſired now threatening to prove an inſuperable obſtacle to our union. I had even cauſe for additional chagrin, on reflecting that my own indiſcreet wiſh of exhibiting my fair charge had expoſed us mutually to this unforeſeen mortification. I had, nevertheleſs, entertained hitherto ſo clear a conviction that the ſentiments I cheriſhed for Claudina were ſuch, as while they contributed to her happineſs, would alſo place her out of the reach of thoſe worldly ſorrows and carking cares which corrode the ſweeteſt buds of youth, that I experienced ſomething like aſtoniſhment at the new light St. Victoire's opinions had thrown upon the whole buſineſs. They were not altogether ſo irrational, however, as my ſituation na-

turally inclined me to believe them. I even felt that they were not ſo; though I was unwilling to acknowledge it even to my own heart. In ſpite of that air of levity and nonchalance with which he affected to ſpeak of his ſiſter, it was evident to me that he was much ſtruck with her beauty, and built ſecretly upon it, as a certain means of procuring her a brilliant eſtabliſhment. To ſay truth, I was not without an internal conviction of the ſame nature; and it was this which was my ſcourge. Perhaps we were both blinded by our partiality towards her;—ſo however it was.

Claudina entertained no ſuch views or feelings. She conceived herſelf bound to me by every tie of gratitude or love, and ſhe vindicated both my behaviour and intentions with the dignity of a mind that feels itſelf above miſconſtruction. She did not indeed think herſelf entitled either by

years

years or experience to determine her own conduct; but though ſhe ſubmitted that to the temporary authority of St. Victoire, ſhe did not fail to tell him that nothing ſhort of the conviction of demerit on my part would ever induce her to violate the engagement between us: and ſhe peremptorily refuſed to ſhock or exaſperate me by returning any of the gifts I had laviſhed on her. "Nothing fortune could beſtow" ſhe tenderly declared, "would be in her eyes ſo dear or honourable as thoſe laſting memorials of poverty on her ſide, and of the moſt unalloyed generoſity on mine."—Theſe were refinements quite out of the way of St. Victoire. He had concluded it to be a matter of juſtice that, in taking away his ſiſter, he ſhould guard againſt my ſuffering any other loſs. Alas! he had no conception of thoſe feelings which, in certain caſes, render acquittal an inſult, and degrade us in our own eyes, by forcing

us

us to discover that our best actions have been deemed venal and selfish!—'Oh! consent to be obliged to me!' have I been ready on other occasions to exclaim, when I have seen the proud and too susceptible heart shrink distrustfully from the tender offices of a kindness it feared it could not return. 'Prove that you esteem me enough to believe that I am rewarded in the action of serving you!'

St. Victoire, in fine, like a true man of the world, concluded that his sister loved the baubles I had presented her with. He, therefore, gave up the contest; satisfied to gain his chief point her way, since he could not gain it his own; and he removed her that very night from the house in which she had hitherto resided, to that of the Marchioness de S——, a young Frenchwoman of considerable rank, whose husband had emigrated some time after St.

Victoire,

Victoire, and was in the same regiment with the latter. The finances of the Marquis de S—— were said to be in better order than those of his friend: but he lived expensively, made a great figure, and indulged his wife in the same habits of dissipation and high play they had both formerly pursued at Paris. St. Victoire was by no means behind-hand in extravagance. Through that mist of disappointment and chagrin which clouded my present prospects, I was not, therefore, without a ray of hope that the whole establishment of these high-toned noblesse was upon so uncertain a base as might bring Claudina once more within my reach, without any violent struggle on my part. How sweet to me was the idea that *she* would neither feel humbled nor degraded by such a circumstance, but would do me the justice to understand me. I had an interview with the dear girl on the evening before she left the house of our mutual friend. Her tears,

her

her endearments, her proteſtations of unſhaken conſtancy, calmed the burning indignation of my heart. I could deny nothing to her ſolicitation, and I, therefore, promiſed to attend the future with a degree of moderation I was not at firſt diſpoſed to ſhow.

The houſe in which Claudina now reſided was one where I, of courſe, had no acceſs: and, in ſpite of my promiſes, a few days rendered this conſtraint inſupportable to me. I weighed maturely every poſſible motive of intereſt, kindneſs, or even hoſtility, by which I might hope to act upon St. Victoire; but in vain. He was a man ſo entirely out of my ſphere both as to character and connexions, ſo wrong-headed and cold-hearted, that I found no medium through which I could reach him. I was a thouſand times tempted to have recourſe to the moſt deſperate; but to what purpoſe?—We were both,

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in the firſt place, under the immediate cognizance of authority: an attempt to defy it might occaſion the moſt ſerious ill conſequences, not only to ourſelves, but to our countrymen. St. Victoire was, beſides, unqueſtionably brave; and we could, therefore, at beſt meet only on a footing of equality. How, if fortune gave me the advantage, ſhould I be benefited by it? In truth, the only benefit it appeared to me I could poſſibly derive from ſuch a rencontre, was that of dying.—I had a little of the Anglo-mania in me; and there were moments of impotent rage and grief when I was inclined to think that no deſpicable reſource.

A man, however, muſt take more than one bitter doſe of diſappointment, I believe, before he really comes to ſuch an extremity: at leaſt that was my caſe. I now endeavoured, under the auſpices of my correſpondent

respondent at St. Petersburg, to apply myself more assiduously to business, in order to lighten my cares.—I had soon reason to suspect that it would, in fact, only increase them. I was seized with alarm at some critical circumstances that occurred, and censured myself for a remissness which yet, I believe, had had no material influence over my father's concerns; though in the moment of surprise I was disposed to think otherwise. My friend now also communicated to me some particulars relative to our affairs in England, which my correspondents there had, through kindness, forborne minutely to relate; and I perceived that while I had been solely occupied in lamenting griefs, some real, some chimerical, but all of them wholly selfish, an evil of the most serious nature impended over my family, and threatened to bring my own mortifications to their climax. I now exerted myself to retrieve lost time, and to

recover

recover certain debts, the amount of which had not hitherto appeared ſo material in my eyes as I found it ought to have done. My zeal, however, was too late: it could not have ſaved us, had it been earlier awakened; but it would have acquitted me to my own heart, which ever painfully throbs at the recollection; and I ſhould have been better prepared to encounter what followed:—the firſt ſhips that arrived from England told me that my father had been declared a bankrupt.

I cannot even yet think of the circumſtance, without a renewal of thoſe afflicting ſenſations by which I was at the moment ſtunned and overwhelmed. Here then was an end of my towering hopes, my high-ſpirited affluence and independence. Here was ſuch a termination of every claim with reſpect to Claudina, as it would not be in her power even to counteract.

For though ſhe had been willing to beſtow herſelf upon me, could I accept her? It ſeemed on the contrary, that honour and juſtice commanded me to free her from her engagements, and thus give her thoſe chances in life, on the event of which her brother had been ſo ſanguine. From him my heart now revolted more entirely than before. I could not endure the triumph I believed he would have over me, or the opportunity he would take to exult to his ſiſter in the ſuperiority of his own judgment and prudence. I made no doubt but he would be little-minded enough to conclude that I had foreſeen the misfortune that was likely to fall upon my family, and that I was aware I ſhould make no ſacrifice whatever in ſecuring the poſſeſſion of Claudina. Nay, it was not even clear to me, that, in the exceſs of his vanity and ſelf-love, he would not ſuppoſe I had built ſomething upon the advantages of ſuch

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a connexion. Thefe, and fimiliar reflexions, together with various additional chagrins refulting from my fituation, made me now in reality almoft weary of exiftence. But I owed the care of mine to thofe dear relatives who were fuffering with me, and who had not, like myfelf, youth and health to combat with difficulties.

It became highly neceffary that I fhould return to England: but although I meditated fo doing without taking leave of Claudina, my refolution, neverthelefs, failed me as the time drew near. I will own, however, that, among my objections to feeing her, the fituation in which I now ftood was one. My mind, unlike hers, was not fufficiently felf-poifed to avoid finding a humiliation in poverty; or poffibly the recollection of her brother was blended too intimately with that even of

 herfelf,

herſelf,—and, oh! how different were they in their natures!—to admit of my being governed by a genuine and unmixed feeling.—The cruel hour of ſeparation at length arrived. Claudina and I parted as moſt lovers part, with many tears, many proteſtations, and ſome careſſes. She was never very laviſh of thoſe: yet I know not how it was, but ſhe had the art of convincing me that no want of love occaſioned her reſerve. She had little reaſon I found to be ſatisfied with the ſituation in which her brother had placed her. It obliged her daily to ſee a number of giddy young officers, none of them in circumſtances to realiſe the ſanguine expectations of St. Victoire, though ſufficiently ſuſceptible or gallant to be troubleſome to his ſiſter. Nevertheleſs, ſo great a blemiſh does the want of fortune caſt on beauty, that I did not learn Claudina had any decided admirer of rank or affluence enough to expoſe

pofe her to perfecution. In fact I gathered nothing of all this from herfelf: for of herfelf, except when the queftion of duties or affections arofe, fhe feldom or never fpoke. But my good friend the merchant's wife, with whom fhe had refided, referved for me conftantly all the information it was poffible to collect; and when that proved infufficient to fill up our converfations on the fubject, we had a fupplementary fund of conjecture that was never exhaufted.

I did not fail to relate faithfully to Claudina, before we parted, the misfortunes in which I found myfelf involved, and thofe future ones I apprehended. Claudina, however, I quickly perceived, had not yet attained any diftinct idea of poverty. She, indeed, conceived very clearly what it was to lofe the luxuries of a fpacious apartment, and a numerous train of domeftics; to have nothing but a hired carriage at

 command,

command, and to be reſtricted by prudence in the purchaſe of a trinket. All this ſhe daily felt; therefore ſhe underſtood it:—at her age we rarely look deeper. But ſuch was the character of her mind both for genuine ſimplicity and rational pleaſures, that ſhe was not able to make herſelf any griefs out of theſe and ſimilar loſſes. Her humbleſt ideas of indigence extended to a plain, and ſometimes ſcanty meal, like that of our good paſtor; a cottage too like his, more calculated for utility than ornament, and certain common domeſtic occupations which the narrowneſs of his circumſtances neceſſarily impoſed on his wife and daughters.—How many people picture poverty in the way Claudina did!—Ah! ſhould ſuch be carried into the miſerable hovels where real indigence reſides!—ſhould they there ſee their fellow-creature, poſſibly their equal, ſtretched out in ſickneſs and hopeleſs miſery!—ſhould they ſee, not pri-

vation,

vation, but famine;—not diſappointment, but deſpair;—babyhood without playfulneſs, manhood without vigour, and age without nouriſhment; how would their erring, but tender and humane hearts, ſuffer under the ſpectacle!—Let us not deceive ourſelves!—Extreme and abject poverty is, vice excepted, the moſt deplorable condition of human nature!—It carries not, as the more acute ſufferings of body or of mind do, a balm or a termination in itſelf.—No!—it is like water poured drop by drop upon the brain of a criminal, till the whole man groans under excruciating torture!—Should I expoſe the dear girl I loved, even remotely, to the experience of ſo cruel an evil?—My whole ſoul revolted from the idea.

"Liſten to me, my dear Claudina!" ſaid I, as we were parting. "When I offered you my hand and my heart I believed that

 I could

I could add to them the bleſſings of independence at leaſt: it has proved otherwiſe, and your brother was more correct in his calculation of the chances of life than we ſuppoſed him to be. I will never rob the ſiſter of the Count St. Victoire, or rather I will never rob my own Claudina, of ſuch real advantages in it as ſhe has a right from her merit or charms to expect; though I would, without ſcruple, have permitted her to ſacrifice to our mutual attachment thoſe ideal goods, thoſe factitious ſubſtitutes, for all that is really valuable and honourable in human nature, to which common minds bow down with ſo implicit a reverence.—While you love me however, deareſt Claudina! you are, and can be only mine: but ſhould you ceaſe to do ſo, the bond between us is from that moment broken: nor ſhall an injurious thought, much leſs a reproach, purſue you on my part."—Theſe were high-ſounding words;

words; but I have on reflexion believed them not ſo ſincere as they then appeared to be. There was certainly a little of the chicanery of love in them.—I ſoftened her ſoul by the idea of my approaching departure; I won over every tender and grateful feeling of her mind by the recollection of the paſt: finally, I ſubdued her ſenſibility by the extravagance of my own; and when her enthuſiaſm was at its higheſt, I then ſaid to her, "Claudina, if your heart makes another choice, renounce me." All this was perhaps at laſt only an ingenious artifice of ſelf-love!—but when a man does not know he is artificial, I think he may be pardoned. Neverthelefs, if it was really my intention to extort freſh proteſtations of conſtancy from Claudina, I was diſappointed; for ſhe made none: ſhe wept bitterly, however; and her expreſſive eyes, while ſhe liſtened to me, rendered language unneceſſary. I embraced her once

more, and immediately after embarked for England.

This voyage was not like the laſt. I no longer found any charms either in the heavens or the ocean; and my thoughts wandered inceſſantly over the paſt and the future with the moſt painful anxiety. We had not been long at ſea before a heavy gale aroſe that rendered our navigation even leſs pleaſant than before. When I heard the ſailors talk of the danger of the breakers, and ſaw, though at a diſtance, the horrible proſpect they preſented, I thought of Claudina and her unfortunate mother, flying, like many others of their countrywomen, from their native land, from all that was dear or familiar, to contend with elements no leſs inhoſpitable to them than the human race. After beating about ſome days, we ran at length for ſecurity into a ſmall Swediſh port. I was tempted

tempted to land, in order to ſet my foot in the country where I had firſt ſeen Claudina, and to make a ſort of love-pilgrimage towards the very ſpot. However I reſiſted this impulſe of romance; and it was lucky I did ſo: I ſhould otherwiſe have loſt my paſſage: for the wind became fair a few hours after, and it was not long before I landed in England.

I found my father's ſituation there even more perplexing than I had expected it to be. His concerns had been ſo multiplied and ſo various, that it required the moſt perſevering aſſiduity to diſentangle them, or reduce the chaos to order. This was in a great meaſure my employment: my days were neceſſarily devoted to it: and, after immenſe application, I returned home ſpiritleſs and exhauſted of an evening, to riſe the enſuing morning to the ſame painful occupations. People to whom life is a

plaything know nothing of ſuch cares as fill up the hours of one half of the community, and too often unfit them, not merely for its frivolous, but often its ſocial intercourſe: yet theſe apparent favourites of fortune, like ſpoiled children, often become weary of their toy, while thoſe in whoſe hands it is an engine of either private or public utility, have always within themſelves a ſource of honourable ſatisfaction:—and ſuch, in the midſt of my vexations, was mine!

My father was a man of ſtrict probity and deep intellect; but his manners were not ingratiating, and his underſtanding was of that biting and repulſive kind which makes few friends. He had a decided love of ſcheming; and his plans had, for the moſt part, been both ſagacious and ſucceſsful: a concurrence of circumſtances had now rendered them far otherwiſe. The

conſequence

confequence was that he became bitterly cenfured, and even indirectly calumniated. He was too proud to endure this, and too helplefs to remedy it. His conftitution funk under the conflict; and I found him, on my arrival in England, far gone in a malady that had every appearance of proving mortal. It is in the hour of forrow, ficknefs, or poverty, that we learn how to eftimate our natural affinities. Placed on the pinnacle of health and profperity, man ftands a fort of independent and felf-poffeffed being, whom the ties and affections only touch at certain points: reduce him from this ftation in fociety, and he will at once become fenfible of his own infufficiency. It is then he will, perhaps, beft learn the value of thofe friends with whom nature has providently furnifhed him, and whofe habits, taftes, affections, nay even weakneffes, moft in fympathy with his own, calculate them to take place of all others.

others. Never were my parents and myſelf ſo much attached as at this juncture: yet it was a ſorrowful one; and I ſtill cannot remember without a pang the hour when I loſt my father. In addition to this heavy calamity, my mother had the grief of ſeeing her only brother alienated from us ſome months before, by the circumſtances in which our late bankrupcy had involved him. He was a man of conſiderable property, and therefore ſtood the ſhock: but he did not eaſily forgive the perſon who expoſed him to the hazard, and all intercourſe between him and my father had been conſequently broken off. On the death of the latter he came to viſit my mother; but he expreſſed no deſire to ſee me, and I was too proud to obtrude myſelf upon him.

I had now neither hope nor dependance in life. The narrow income my mother's

ſettlement enabled her to reſcue from the wreck of our affairs was barely equal to her ſupport. I had myſelf received too many indignities, or at leaſt what I conceived to be ſuch, from the few who called themſelves my father's friends, during the progreſs of our misfortune, to place the ſmalleſt reliance upon them; and I was torn to pieces between the claims of nature and thoſe of love. Claudina was ever firſt and laſt in my thoughts, amid all my cares and torments: but I ſaw no chance of calling her mine. I could even hear from her but ſeldom; and although her own letters, when they reached me, breathed the moſt unchanged affection, my friend the merchant's wife failed not to ſupply her huſband with little reports, which if they did not abſolutely excite my diſtruſt, yet created ſomething in my boſom ſo nearly allied to jealouſy, as ſeverely to increaſe my incidental chagrins. His manner of

relating

relating them was, besides, so cold and laconic, that I hardly knew what to conclude or gather from his hints: to say truth, I have since had reason to believe that the chief object of both these well-meaning, though misjudging people, was in unison with what they believed would be the wish of my friends,—to break an engagement that threatened only ruin to either of the parties concerned. I, like Claudina, was not without some natural or acquired advantages; and the worthy man at St. Petersburg, therefore, concluded that, if detached from her, I should most probably settle with some commercial family in England, marry, as he had done, one of the daughters, and step in for as large a portion of the goods of this world along with her as I honestly could contrive to do.

This might, perhaps, have happened: and,

and, indeed, my affairs went on in a train that ſeemed not to make it unlikely: but I had no taſte for the project. I revolved many, although that was not among the number, without being able to fix on one. I had ſecretly a ſtrong deſire to plunge into ſome adventurous ſcheme abroad; but I was fettered by two oppoſing ſentiments, which were fated by turns to engroſs my life and my heart. My mother's health was daily declining: ſhe had neither ſupport nor conſolation in the world but me, and the period of her exiſting there ſeemed likely to be ſo ſhort, that I could not reſolve to abbreviate it. I, like Gray, had found out that "a man can never have more than one mother:" and mine had, from very childhood, retained a ſtrong intereſt in my affections. I never in my life ſaw a creature ſo perfectly feminine, without being inſipid or weak: yet ſhe had neither a very lovely perſon, nor a highly cultivated

cultivated underſtanding; but ſhe was ſo gentle, ſo indulgent, ſo truly conjugal and maternal, ſo admirably calculated to ſoothe the bitter moments of life, and to enjoy without intoxication its modeſt and genuine pleaſures, that my heart, even in manhood, was almoſt as much hers as though ſhe had been amongſt the moſt dazzling of her ſex.

While I was in this anxious ſtate of indigence and indeciſion, a propoſal was made me from a houſe with which my father had had ſome commercial connexions, that promiſed to be in the end ſufficiently advantageous to merit conſideration at leaſt. My mother was urgent with me to accept the overture. She did not at the moment confide to me all her reaſons, becauſe ſhe feared they might prove viſionary; but I could eaſily ſee ſhe had the matter deeply at heart. The ſituation was

not

not ſuch as I ſhould myſelf have deſired; but I knew that I had the reputation of indulging a proud and almoſt a rebellious ſpirit, as far as the world was concerned, the energy of which had been increaſed by my education and habits. I took therefore a ſort of malicious pleaſure in diſappointing the plodding calculators of my father's acquaintance who had affirmed I had no uſeful abilities; and I half reſolved to prove to them that what I could reſolve to undertake I could execute, with talents far beyond their methodical dulneſs. This was again the project of a young man: but I never could feel a half-intereſt in any thing. My pride, as well as my future advantage, was deeply ſtaked upon that before me; and I conſequently turned my attention towards it, with a zeal that not only aſtoniſhed others, but, to ſay truth, ſurpriſed even myſelf.

Behold me, then, doomed for my offences, whatever thoſe were,—and my conſcience, I own, did not reproach me with many,—to ſpend the greater part of the day on a high ſtool, and go through all the drudgery of a compting-houſe—buſy with invoices, &c. &c.—and at intervals execrating French ariſtocracy, Ruſſian traineaus, and Engliſh ſpeculation. I ſaw my mother only of an evening: but I ſaw her countenance lighted up at thoſe meetings with an unuſual degree of complacency and ſoftneſs: even her health ſeemed to amend: and if I was at ſome moments diſpoſed to break my chain, I never viſited her without finding freſh motives for enduring it. Our meals were neceſſarily frugal, and our indulgencies few; yet my income, though narrow, was a conſiderable addition to hers: I, therefore, daily perceived the impoſſibility of alienating it. On feeling the lightneſs of my own purſe,

my

my conduct towards St. Victoire, nevertheless, sometimes came home to me. I remembered the half-disdainful hints I had thrown out on his poverty; and although they were certainly extorted by no small degree of insolence on his side, I became sensible that I had degraded my own character by returning it. It was now my part to be indigent. I did not feel myself at all the less proud on that account; and I, therefore, learnt to make allowances for him. Yet I saw, with half despair, that I was further removed than I had been at that period from all chance of conciliating his regard; since it was not even a concession like that I made to my own heart that would have done it: and it was very clear, that the man who had despised a rich merchant would, at all times, utterly shut his door against a poor one. Claudina, and myself, were, however, both growing older; and I concluded, that if

we could but contrive to grow richer too, we might at length reaſonably ſet his authority at defiance.

In ſpite of the myſtery my mother had thought it prudent to obſerve, it was not long before I penetrated into the motives of her conduct. When chance ſent me home to her lodgings at an unexpected hour, I more than once encountered my uncle coming from them. Our meeting appeared at firſt to diſconcert him: by degrees he ſeemed to accuſtom himſelf to it, and at length beſtowed on me a half-gracious ſalutation. I returned the civility, but made no overtures towards improving it. I learnt, however, from third perſons, that his viſits were pretty frequent: and had I not done ſo, I ſhould have known by a certain number of additional comforts and conveniences I obſerved my mother to poſſeſs lately, and which I knew our limited

mited means would not have allowed her to indulge in, that ſome more certain reſources than our own were concerned in them. This was every way balm to my heart; not from its flattering any views that immediately reſpected myſelf, but as I knew that the returning kindneſs of her brother was, of all poſſible events, the moſt grateful to hers, and could not fail to be in worldly circumſtances infinitely advantageous. In law I was eventually my uncle's heir; but he had cut off both my mother and myſelf, by a will made ſeveral months before the death of my father; and as his fortune was his own to beſtow, we could, under theſe circumſtances, claim nothing but the little ſtipend which his fraternal regard had induced him to allot his ſiſter. A reconciliation might ſtill, indeed, incline him to change the diſpoſition of his worldly concerns; but I now knew too much of life to have any great reliance

 upon

upon this hope, and too much of the dilatory nature of moſt men not to doubt whether mere indolence might not defeat his purpoſe, ſhould it even be favourable towards me. I made no doubt, however, but my mother formed a thouſand chimerical projects, the firſt ſtep towards the accompliſhing of which would be to aſſociate me in my uncle's commercial undertakings: and as ſhe was moſt ſanguine in her opinion of my perſonal influence and abilities, to whatever point they were directed, I was ſure ſhe ſecretly perſuaded herſelf that I ſhould in time prove the ſole manager, and, finally, the heir of his wealth.

My plan was far different; but I ſeemed to ſhut my eyes to what was paſſing, and permitted her to follow her own in the manner ſhe deemed moſt judicious. In fact, I earneſtly wiſhed her to acquire ſuch

a ſhare,

a ſhare, both in the heart and domeſtic concerns of her brother, as would make her accede with leſs reluctance to any bolder project I might adopt towards my own eſtabliſhment in life: for in ſpite of the external ſhow I continued to make of content and application, my very ſoul was ſecretly weary of the uniform and mechanical ſort of exiſtence I now endured: or perhaps it was the reſtleſs ſpirit of love that thus undermined my quiet, and rendered me at heart thoroughly averſe from a ſort of occupation, which, had I poſſeſſed a disengaged mind, my early acquirements and habits ought to have fitted me for. What led me to ſuſpect this, was, that my plans, begin at what point of the compaſs they would, always, in the end, pointed towards St. Petersburg; and, though, reaſonably ſpeaking, it was of all places on the globe the laſt where I could have ſubmitted to appear in any ſubordinate ſituation, ſome-

thing relative to it was ever uppermoft in my fancy. Even while meditating a voyage to India I detected myfelf thinking of the fnows of the north: and winter, "all unlovely as it was," proved, from the affociation of ideas, to me a feafon of enjoyment.

Whatever was to be the event of *my* plans, my mother's, at leaft, feemed in a way to be flowly fuccefsful. My uncle invited me feveral times to dine with her at his houfe; and although I had no great caufe to be flattered by my reception there, for he ftill continued to fhow me very little diftinction or regard, I was, on the whole, better pleafed with this fort of conduct, than if he had conceived a ftrong perfonal liking for me. I did not, in fact, believe he had any; though his indulgence towards his fifter induced him to put a conftraint on himfelf: but I was, neverthelefs, a little

ftaggered

ſtaggered when I learnt, from a mutual friend on whoſe veracity I could rely, that, however cold his manners were to me when preſent, he had ſpoken of me, when abſent, in ſuch terms as hardly any but a father would have uſed. I began myſelf to ſuſpect that a gleam of ſunſhine was likely to burſt remotely upon my path; and though I could not altogether ſhape my expectations into any form wholly gratifying, I felt the burthen I had impoſed upon myſelf become daily leſs heavy.

Mine, grievous as it ſeemed to me, was, nevertheleſs, far ſhort of what I continually ſaw fall on others. Among thoſe whom the concerns of buſineſs threw in my way, was a young Frenchman of the name of Vaudreuil. He had been recommended by an eminent houſe at Rouen, and was engaged for the foreign department in ours. His talents for buſineſs ſeemed to be mode-

rate, but his induſtry and application were unequalled; ſo was his temperance. He lived on air: never taſted wine, nor ſhared in any conviviality whatever. Contrary to the general character of his countrymen, he was ſerious in the extreme. His manners were thought proud; and, as he was known to be poor, he was of conſequence little liked by thoſe with whom he was in ſome degree obliged to aſſociate. I had, for Claudina's ſake, a ſlight partiality for thoſe of her country; and I occaſionally manifeſted it towards him. It was increaſed when I found that he had been diſpatched from Rouen to St. Petersburg, before he was ſent over to England, and had ſeen Claudina herſelf. It was not at all probable that his condition in life ſhould have allowed him to mingle in her circle; but I, nevertheleſs, took pleaſure in talking with one who had even ſeen her only. I found him extremely agreeable when I

came

came to converſe with him; and I ſuſpected that he had not been always a man of buſineſs. This, however, was a confeſſion I never could extort from him; and his reſerve naturally created the ſame ſentiment on my part. Once the extreme narrowneſs of his circumſtances obliged him to have recourſe to me for a pecuniary aſſiſtance; and I could ſee the exceſſive pride of his ſoul by the tears it forced into his eyes. As this event, however, did not ſeem to increaſe his confidence in me, it naturally threw a ſtill greater check upon every attempt I might have been inclined to make towards acquiring it.—I think we eſteemed each other more than before; yet a ſort of coldneſs grew up between us—the natural conſequence of a feeling which, by ſome oppoſing principle, is not permitted to act with the force it demands. One more powerful, and even torturing, was awakened in my boſom by a very

ſimple

ſimple accident, and it related to Vaudreuil.

We had engaged to go into the country together on a particular day, as much to ſatisfy ourſelves on a point of curioſity as pleaſure.—I had promiſed to call upon him. He was not quite dreſt, and I went into his room. While converſing with him there, I happened to caſt my eyes upon a black ribbon which was at his boſom;—it ſeemed to me as if a picture ought to depend from it, and I was ſeized with a ſingular fit of curioſity to aſcertain whether there was one or not. I kept my attention earneſtly directed towards the ribbon, and at length was gratified. I ſaw it was, indeed, a picture, but my heart ſuddenly bounded, and my pulſe throbbed, for I believed it to be that of Claudina.—I had now the eye of an Argus, and I had more than one accidental opportunity of reconnoitring

noitring the portrait. It was, beyond doubt, either that of Claudina, or of ſome perſon ſtrongly reſembling her.—In a broken and irreſolute tone I ſtrove to rally Vaudreuil on the ſubject. He made no anſwer, but he ſighed deeply, thruſt the picture into his boſom, and buttoned it up there. I had now room for meditation more gloomy than any I had ever yet indulged. I recollected all the hazards that attended my engagement with Claudina, and the indirect releaſe I had proffered her when we parted. How could I be aſſured that ſhe had not availed herſelf of it? Vaudreuil might be nobly born and highly bred. I ſaw nothing againſt this ſuppoſition. He had been to Petersburg. He might, for aught I knew, be the moſt intimate friend of St. Victoire, and in his eyes, therefore, however poor, not exceptionable as the huſband of his ſiſter. Claudina's country, her habits of thinking, time, diſtance,

ſtance, and the influence of her brother, might have wrought a change in her affections; and while I was waiting the ſlow aid of the future to aſſure my happineſs, the paſt might already have undermined it. —While I think of the tragical moments I endured in conſequence of all theſe conjectures, I cannot help admiring how ingenious man is in tormenting himſelf, and how much a little common ſenſe would on certain occaſions befriend him.

As our party was compoſed of ſeveral perſons, it was not poſſible for me, throughout any part of that day, to bring Vaudreuil to ſuch converſation as might enlighten my doubts. I paſſed, therefore, the moſt anxious and miſerable of nights, one half of which was ſpent in writing to St. Petersburg; and I aroſe almoſt with the dawn, determined to ſatisfy myſelf on the ſubject which agitated me. Alert as I was,

Vaudreuil

Vaudreuil ſeemed no leſs ſo; for at a very early hour in the morning I received a note from him, expreſſed ſingularly well, but with a tone of depreſſion, that, in ſpite of the ſuſpicions which haunted me, excited the deepeſt intereſt in his fate. It contained a requeſt for a ſmall ſum of money, and an urgent intreaty that it might, if poſſible, be ſent by the bearer.—Vaudreuil had acquitted himſelf of his former obligation to me in a manner highly honourable to his feelings, though in reality grievous to mine: for I was ſure that nothing but the moſt painfully rigid economy could have enabled him to do ſo. Yet what he would not acknowledge, delicacy forbade me to wring from him: and I had, therefore, contented myſelf with obliging him by every indirect method I could poſſibly deviſe. Though he did not notice this, I had ſeen, on many occaſions, that it ſunk deeply into his ſoul, and I believed it

had

had rendered him even more reluctant to demand any ſervice from me. I had no doubt that ſomething critical had occurred that induced this application, and I, therefore, without inquiry or heſitation, ſent him a larger ſum than that he requeſted, reſerving my explanation with him to a late hour of the day, when I hoped the exigency that had thus ſuddenly occurred would be ſettled.

I found the time inſupportably long in the interim. It did not at all ſurpriſe me that Vaudreuil failed to appear to execute his uſual daily employment; but I was thunderſtruck on being informed that he had thrown it up.—This, however, was not altogether true. He had, indeed, ſtated to his employers that it would not be poſſible for him to attend during a period, the extent of which he could not decide: but it was by no means clear, from the tenor of

his

his letter, that he would return to it no more.—I flew to his lodgings: but I there learnt only a confirmation of my chagrin; for he had discharged them the moment he received the money from me; and the persons of the house could give me no other account of him than that he walked towards the city to find out some public conveyance by which he might leave London.

Had I been sure Claudina was his companion, I think I could hardly have been more enraged. In the first transports of surprise and indignation I at once concluded that he had observed my emotion at sight of the picture; that he was perfectly aware of the interest I took in the original; and that he had basely practised upon my credulity, by making the supply I had sent him the means of extricating either her or himself, or both, from my resentment.

 Nothing,

Nothing, however, was leſs likely than any of theſe ſuppoſitions. Vaudreuil did not ſeem the man who would ſhrink from any perſon's reſentment; much leſs take advantage either of generoſity or credulity. It was improbable in the extreme that Claudina ſhould be in England; and it was perfectly abſurd to ſuppoſe that he had ſhipped himſelf off, at an hour's notice, for Petersburg.—I was not without an inclination to ſhip myſelf off, nevertheleſs;—but I grew cooler as I continued to reflect. The picture, after all, might not be that of Claudina. Vaudreuil might have concerns that called him thus ſuddenly away, without any reference to love; and, above every thing, there was internal evidence in the ſtyle of his letter, and my knowledge of his character, that he would, under any circumſtances, return.

My reaſon was tolerably ſatisfied; but the

the aching demand of my heart was not appeaſed. More events, however, are ſometimes comprized within a few hours than at others paſs in years. While I was thus racking my imagination on the ſubject of Claudina and Vaudreuil, my mother's patience, and her meſſenger's, had been wearied in ſeeking me. I was found at laſt; and I learnt, not without a ſtrong emotion of anxiety and ſurpriſe, that I had been ſent for to my uncle, who was taken with an apoplectic fit. I haſtened immediately to his houſe, where I found my mother; by whom I was informed that every effort to recover him had been fruitleſs.—As he had never been ſenſible from the moment ſhe ſaw him, ſhe had had no opportunity of ſtrengthening his good will towards me; or of influencing him in the diſpoſal of his worldly affairs by the ſight of her own tenderneſs and grief. All her highly cheriſhed hopes, therefore, were ſuddenly blighted;

 and,

and, in addition to a very afflicting calamity, ſhe had a diſappointment to encounter for which ſhe was wholly unprepared.—That I felt was very ſmall.—I had never relied on my uncle, and had been, in fact, more afraid of his entangling me by ſome half kindneſs, that would have rendered him the arbiter of my actions, than ſanguine in my expectations from his generoſity. My mother knew, however, that ſhe ſhould in ſome degree benefit by his will (though reſentment towards my father had excluded me from ſo doing); and we were accordingly preſent when it was opened.

The firſt thing that excited our attention and ſurpriſe was the date, which was more recent than we expected. Being a batchelor, he had no immediate relatives, ourſelves excepted, on whom to beſtow his wealth. He gave a conſiderable number of legacies, however, to many of his friends; he ſettled

a large

a large portion of his perſonal fortune on my mother:—but both ſhe and I looked at each other with aſtoniſhment, when we found the reſidue was allotted to me. This reſidue included a commercial property to ſome extent, together with an eſtate which he had purchaſed in his native country, Lanerkſhire. Never ſhall I forget the look my mother gave me:—it was ſo ſweet an approbation of the ſacrifices ſhe believed I had made to moderation and to her tranquillity:—it conveyed to my ſoul ſo tender an aſſurance, that ſhe was perſuaded I owed to my own ſelf-government the good fortune I had thus unexpectedly encountered, that it was more flattering to me than if I had received the wealth of the world. On her ſide, I believe, the acquiſition of half of it would have been leſs delightful than that of her "ſimple native vale."—The romantic falls of the Clyde had been the ſcene of her earlieſt and tendereſt

 recollections;

recollections; it was in that neighbourhood, too, I was born; and the spot was endeared by a variety of nameless local charms, congenial to the most insensible bosom, and peculiarly so to those of my country. *I* also was not without my little hoard of hopes and recollections; but they were somewhat damped by the vague doubt I had lately cherished with regard to Claudina. My mother easily discerned I had something struggling in my mind beyond even those emotions naturally excited by the occasion.—She had long entertained a surmise that I had some attachment; but she naturally concluded that it was subdued by prudence, and, therefore, waited tranquilly till the impulse of my own heart should induce me to confide it to her. This was not the moment to do so. I could not prevail on myself to let her see that I doubted the fidelity of Claudina; and, in truth, the circumstance on which I founded

founded my doubt, however perplexing to to the imagination of a lover, was in itſelf ſo puerile and uncertain, that I knew not how to reveal it.

I waited impatiently the return of Vaudreuil; for I was perſuaded that he would return, or that I ſhould at leaſt hear from him, though it were only in diſcharge of the pecuniary obligation between us; and I was neceſſarily obliged to employ myſelf, in the interim, in the regulation of my uncle's concerns. I did this with the more alacrity, as it was my intention, the moment they were in any ſafe train, to embark for Petersburg, bear the news of my own change of fortune to Claudina, decide by her looks and her reception of me upon the intereſt I ſtill held in her heart, and, if I found that unchanged, prevail with her to withdraw, either openly or in ſecret, from the authority of St. Vic-

toire, and accompany me to England as my wife.—A long and cruel fortnight paſſed, however, without any tidings of Vaudreuil. During that period I could hardly at intervals forbear ſmiling, to ſee thoſe who now called themſelves my friends imputing the indifference and half melancholy which hung about me to a hypocritical ſorrow for my uncle's death. I believe I was looked upon by theſe men of the world as a complete diſſembler; and ſo far were they from calculating what paſſed in my heart, that I have no doubt they thought me ſecretly overwhelmed with exultation and joy.

I had been ſo indefatigable in my exertions, as ſoon to prepare every thing for my approaching departure. I meditated in what manner I ſhould, without ſaying too much, communicate to my mother the nature of the buſineſs that carried me abroad;

and

and I was walking, deeply engroſſed with my own reflexions, along the Strand, when, happening to caſt my eyes upon a hackney-coach that paſſed me, I ſaw Vaudreuil in it. It was driving very faſt; and beyond my reach, before I had recollection to ſtop it.—I could entertain no doubt, however, that it was him, for he bowed to me ſmilingly as he paſſed. His countenance was more lighted up; and, from the glance I caught of him, I thought he ſeemed better dreſſed than uſual.

This was a myſtery, the unravelling of which at once engaged all my attention. That Vaudreuil ſhould be in London, ſhould know himſelf to be my debtor, yet neither write nor call upon me; ſhould be aware that he ſtood expoſed to the moſt degrading ſuſpicion, yet coolly bow to me from a hackney-coach, ſeemed almoſt beyond belief. I went to his former lodgings;

but

but he had not been heard of there. I then haſtened to the compting-houſe where he had been uſed to attend, but no tidings of his return had reached any of the clerks. A letter, however, was put into my charge, addreſſed to him, that had been ſent thither by the people with whom he had lived. I knew it inſtantly to be the hand-writing of Claudina, and I could, therefore, no longer doubt it to be her picture which he wore. —All my ſuſpicions again recurred. I was on the point of tearing open the letter in order to ſatisfy them :—but I remembered I had no claim over Vaudreuil, but one I ſhould have bluſhed to profit by ; and that, if he had even robbed me of Claudina's affections, it was ſufficiently probable that he never knew I had engaged them. No other acquittal but that of the petty money concern between us was, in the apparent ſtate of the buſineſs, neceſſary on his part ; and ſuch was the confidence inſpired by the

kind

kind of character I had obſerved in him, that I was ſtill perſuaded, if there was any thing treacherous in his conduct, he would at length appear to anſwer it. The letter had no ſhip-mark: I examined that of the poſt; it was from Hull.—My voyage to Petersburg would then be fruitleſs.—Claudina was evidently not there.—The appearance of Vaudreuil would be, perhaps, alike uſeleſs to me. She would probably have beſtowed herſelf upon him before we met;—for, if there was no treacherous motive in her voyage, why did ſhe not write to me? I had not even heard from her for a conſiderable time before. But this circumſtance I had hitherto imputed to ſome accidental failure of her letters: that before me announced a different reaſon for her ſilence; and I had the torture of ſuppoſing ſhe was at that very moment in London, yet as far out of the reach of my penetration as if in the wilds of Siberia.

I returned

I returned home extremely melancholy; and, to my great ſurpriſe, found waiting for me there the very perſon I had been over half the town in ſearch of—in other words, Vaudreuil himſelf. In my hand I held Claudina's letter, which I had taken poſſeſſion of, leaving word where it was to be found; and I advanced towards him with a turbulence and impatience of which he did not ſeem at all ſenſible. His countenance was, indeed, as it had appeared to me in the coach, animated and cheerful: in a word, he looked happy, and that was enough to make me miſerable.

"I come," ſaid he, ſtepping towards me, "to demand your congratulations, and to announce a piece of good fortune in which you will ſympathize with me."

"Spare yourſelf the relation," ſaid I ſullenly—"I know the good fortune that

has

has befallen you without its being told. You are married—or on the point of being ſo.—And, to ſhow you that I am better informed of your affairs than you ſuppoſe, I can even name the faithleſs woman who has beſtowed herſelf upon you."

"When I do marry," ſaid Vaudreuil, laughing, "I hope it will not be a faithleſs woman, at leaſt.—You are, in truth, a moſt ingenious gueſſer: and after you have pointed out the fair one who means to do me the favour of beſtowing herſelf upon me, I ſhall know what portion of gratitude is due both to you and to her. In the interim, however, aſſure yourſelf that it is not matrimony, but that which has of late engroſſed a much greater ſhare of the thoughts of mankind, politics—which is in queſtion with me.—I have received undoubted information that the new government in France will allow me to recover

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at leaſt a conſiderable portion of my family claims and property there. I have never borne arms againſt my country; and ſhould I prove ſucceſsful in my application, I ſhall be enabled to ſerve a brother who is leſs fortunately circumſtanced, and a ſiſter inexpreſſibly dear to me."

"You have a ſiſter!" exclaimed I.

"Undoubtedly I have," returned Vaudreuil, ſmiling archly.

"And you wear her picture"—

—"At my boſom!" and he drew it from thence.

"Ah, it is Claudina!—*my* Claudina—my *own* Claudina," cried I, ſnatching and kiſſing it rapturouſly a thouſand times. Vaudreuil could not forbear ſmiling at an étourderie

étourderie ſo foreign to all he had yet ſeen of my character.

"I am ignorant how ſoon ſhe is to be your Claudina," ſaid he at length, gently diſengaging the portrait; but I know ſhe is at preſent mine; and I am not quite aſſured that ſhe will permit me to authoriſe ſuch violent careſſes.—Let us be ſeated, my kind friend," he added, recovering his uſual intereſting gravity of tone and manner; "and if you can command theſe tranſports of yours,—ſo little in uniſon with our ideas of Engliſh phlegm,—I will tell you, what I am ſure you will have real pleaſure in hearing—I will tell you that your generous interpoſition reſcued Claudina and both her brothers from a ſtate of half-deſpondency; that your pecuniary kindneſs ſupplied with neceſſaries and comforts the proud ſpirit and ſuffering frame of St. Victoire:—finally, that it has afforded

ed Claudina herſelf the means of coming up to London, and of thanking you in perſon.—Theſe, believe me, are not dreams," ſaid he, perceiving me ſtare with aſtoniſhment: "it is but very lately that I have known the hiſtory of my own family: ſuch as it is I will relate it to you.—I need not tell you that I am much younger than St. Victoire—there is, in fact, only the difference of two years between Claudina and myſelf:—but I look older—for I have ſuffered,"—he added, ſighing. "From the time I had any uſe of reaſon, it unfortunately happened that my opinion on political ſubjects did not accord with thoſe of my family—I was, therefore, an early outcaſt from it, and remained in France, when my relations quitted it, without their deigning to take the ſmalleſt intereſt in my after fate. My name was prohibited to Claudina's lips, as attaching diſgrace to her own; and it was the conſtant habit of

ſuppreſſing

ſuppreſſing it that probably prevented its reaching your ears. I was not much more fortunate, however, in my political career than my father and my brother had been. The fickle and too enthuſiaſtic nation of which I was an individual became ſanguinary, and diſgraced the nobleſt aim of humanity. I was nearly a victim to the guillotine; but a friendly banker at Paris concealed me, and by his aſſiſtance I paſſed in ſafety to Rouen. I was not without abilities, and am among thoſe of my countrymen who think it no diſgrace to uſe them. I applied myſelf under a borrowed name to buſineſs: but I did not find that I was wholly ſafe from perſecution, and was, therefore, adviſed to quit France. My heart fondly turned towards St. Petersburg, where I believed I ſhould find my mother, my brother, and my ſiſter. As I was now rather more unfortunate than themſelves, I conceived that my offences would be ex-

piated in their eyes; and I accordingly embarked. I ſoon found that I had had the misfortune to loſe one of the three, without being happy enough to recover the other two; for my reception from St. Victoire was neither brotherly nor generous. It was indeed ſuch as determined me to meet him no more; for I was not without ſome ſhare of the family pride when it was rouſed. I ſaw Claudina accidentally for a quarter of an hour, but he would not permit me to converſe with her freely. I wrote to her, however; and I requeſted from her my mother's picture, as a memorial of my family. She did not poſſeſs it; but ſhe ſent me her own, together with an earneſt intreaty to ſee me again. No doubt ſhe thought me very unkind; for I was ſo circumſtanced that I could not enter the liſts with St. Victoire on that ſubject, and he eluded my addreſs when I attempted to ſend her another letter.

ter. I, therefore, quitted St. Petersburg without having an opportunity of vindicating my ſentiments to her, and came over to England; where, by the continued aſſiſtance of my worthy friends at Rouen, I obtained an employment, in the courſe of which I was fortunate enough to meet with you.—Ah! your generous heart, my dear friend," ſaid he, preſſing my hand, "has ſympathiſed with mine during this narration!—May it be thus that good actions ever come home to the boſom of him who performs them!—You reſpected the innocent tenderneſs of Claudina, and that tenderneſs will, I hope, henceforward be unremittingly exerciſed to reward you!—You extended your philanthropy and good offices to a foreigner whom your countrymen did not always treat with the indulgence due to the unfortunate:—you have gained by it a friend, who will, to the lateſt hour of his life, be the friend of Engliſh-

men, and the protector of those of any country to whom protection is necessary."

Vaudreuil spoke this with an energy and seriousness that was extremely affecting: or else its being my own panegyric caused it extremely to affect me. He spoke English tolerably; but on this occasion he expressed himself throughout in French: and I know not how it happens, but my translation seems to have lost all the fire and spirit of the original. Nothing now appeared necessary towards my felicity but to see Claudina. I told him as much; and at the same moment, recollecting the letter of hers I still possessed, I offered it to him. —"I have conversed with her since it was written," said he, putting it in his pocket; "and, therefore, know its contents.—St. Victoire is at this moment extremely fatigued, and in no condition to receive you. Claudina, who has not been many hours in

town

town after a moſt rapid journey, will herſelf be the better for a ſhort repoſe; and as ſhe cannot calculate that I ſhould meet with you ſo ſoon, ſhe will probably find it. You do not yet know by what means I became poſſeſſed of your ſecret. Have you no curioſity?—or are you ſo inhoſpitable that you are already ſolicitous to get rid of me?"

Vaudreuil was not wrong in his ſurmiſe. I could with great pleaſure have taken him by the arm, and led him out of my houſe towards that in which I ſhould find his ſiſter. I had not the leaſt curioſity to know how he became acquainted with my *ſecret*, as he called it. It appeared to me that the ſtory would have done equally well at any time: and, in plain terms, that he could not have found one more mal à propos for telling it than that preſent; but I had my meaſures to keep. Vaudreuil had generouſly humbled both himſelf and his

family too much before me, to allow me any liberty of action where they were concerned. I had, therefore, nothing for it but patience: and I endeavoured to collect myſelf to a decent attention. I was reſtleſs, however, at firſt: but the ſubject was ſtill Claudina and her brothers;—it therefore again inſenſibly intereſted and tranquilliſed me.

"I had not been long in England," ſaid Vaudreuil," before I wrote to St. Victoire. We had parted from each other in high diſpleaſure: but when I recollected that it might be perhaps for the laſt time, I could not reſolve to leave him and Claudina without any traces of me; or myſelf without a place in the remembrance of either. I thought it vain, however, to write to her; as he would, doubtleſs, again ſuppreſs my letter. Without being circumſtantial, I gave him to underſtand that, on my arrival in

England,

England, I had fallen upon a plan by which I might ſecure myſelf from the horrors of penury. To ſay truth, I was afraid of explaining the nature of my employment, leſt I ſhould irreparably offend his ariſtocratical ideas; but I made it plain that I ſolicited nothing from him but brotherly good wiſhes and regard. I exhorted him to allow Claudina at leaſt ſometimes to write to me, and gave him my addreſs for that purpoſe. I received no anſwer to this letter: as indeed I hardly expected I ſhould. A conſiderable time paſt away, every hour of which added to my melancholy, as I began to believe that I was fated to be always an alien from my family and connexions; when, on the evening, or rather night, of that day on which you and I had been in the country together, I returned late to my lodgings, and, to my ſurpriſe, found a letter lying there for me, directed in a female hand. It was from Claudina,

 who

who wrote, at the desire of St. Victoire, to request my protection and assistance. They had landed together from a Russian merchantman at the port of Hull; driven abruptly from Petersburg by the indiscretion of St. Victoire. Claudina will give you the particulars of his quarrel with a Russian officer of distinction. They had a meeting in consequence of it, when both were wounded: the Russian severely. My brother, notwithstanding his own suffering, was put under confinement; and death or exile to Siberia seemed the punishment that awaited him. The recovery of his antagonist, however, and an interest he had the address to create for himself in the heart of a female favourite, mitigated his sentence. He was commanded to quit the Russian territories within a limited time, and to return thither no more under pain of death. The period allowed him to prepare for his departure was extremely

short:

ſhort: his ſickneſs, together with his extravagance, had left him totally unprovided with money, nor could his friend the Marquis de S—— aſſiſt him; for he had been himſelf obliged to withdraw from St. Petersburg ſome little time before; and his wife, from diſtreſs of circumſtances, had retired to her father, the Duc de C——. In this exigency, without aſſiſtants, adviſers, or friends, St. Victoire and Claudina could think of no better plan than that of coming over to England, and throwing themſelves upon me—Me!—whoſe miſerable and impoveriſhed ſtate you are ſo well acquainted with!—The calculation they formed of it was, however, very different from the truth. In writing to St. Victoire, I had forborne to draw it in its worſt colours, both for the reaſons I have before given you, and the fear leſt he ſhould ſuſpect me of wanting any pecuniary ſervice from him. This delicacy

delicacy on my part was the ſource of their error: they embarked full of chimerical hopes. Claudina has ſince told me, that, although ſhe dared not hint as much to St. Victoire, there was yet another heart in your iſland on which ſhe relied even more entirely than on mine—how juſtly, I have ſince had ample occaſion to prove!—Their paſſage was rough. My brother's wound, which had been too haſtily cloſed, opened again; but for Claudina's knowledge of Engliſh they would have been totally help-leſs; and ſuch was altogether their ſitua-tion ſoon after they landed, that no re-ſource remained but to write to me, and exhort me to come and extricate them from it. Alas! I had no means to do ſo; and Claudina's letter was, therefore, a ſtab to my heart. At the moment I received it I neither poſſeſſed a ſingle guinea, nor the means of raiſing one. You were the only human being to whom I had ever applied

on a ſimilar occaſion, and I now ventured to throw myſelf a ſecond time upon you. By an effort better ſuited to the liberality of your mind than to your circumſtances, you ſent me a more conſiderable ſum than I had requeſted. I travelled night and day to reach Hull, and fortunately arrived there ſooner than I had been expected; when I immediately called in proper aſſiſtance to St. Victoire, who was ſufficiently altered both in conſtitution and manners to excite my tendereſt ſympathy. As to dear Claudina, ſhe and I had ſoon cauſe to regret that we had not earlier underſtood each other's heart. Nothing could be more delightful than this firſt intercourſe between two beings ſo nearly allied in blood, yet hitherto ſtrangers. Your converſation and habits of thinking had enlightened her mind too much to allow of her cheriſhing the prejudices which had originally diſunited me from my family; and I was no

leſs

leſs delighted with the cultivation of her judgment than with the charms of her perſon. I told her exactly my own ſituation; and, without preciſely naming you, deſcribed the generous friend whoſe aſſiſtance had enabled me to undertake my journey. Claudina, on her part, was not leſs frank. She related to me all the ſecrets of her heart, and beſpoke an intereſt in mine for the man ſhe loved. Imagine our mutual ſurpriſe—our lively and exquiſite pleaſure, when we found that we had in reality been talking of one and the ſame perſon! —There was nothing after this diſcovery ſo much the wiſh of either as to reach London with all poſſible diſpatch. Claudina had already written a long letter to you, in order to account, by a relation of the late events that had befallen St. Victoire, for a ſilence that had exceeded her uſual limits. At my deſire ſhe ſuppreſſed this letter. I hardly entertained a doubt

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but on the receipt of it you would have come to us at the hazard probably of great inconvenience to yourſelf; and, to ſpeak frankly, I alſo promiſed my own heart an indeſcribable ſatisfaction in being the firſt to announce to you thoſe delightful ſenſations in which I was certain you would ſympathiſe. Claudina did not, I aſſure you, make the ſacrifice I demanded of her without ſome regret: but ſhe did make it: and the rather, as we had reaſon to ſuppoſe St. Victoire's health would amend rapidly enough to allow of our ſetting off without much delay. In fact you will perceive by the time of my abſence that we made all poſſible ſpeed. Our circumſtances, nevertheleſs, did not allow us to chooſe the moſt commodious method of travelling, and my brother is of conſequence ill and exhauſted. My firſt buſineſs was, indeed by Claudina's expreſs deſire, to ſeek you: nor was there more

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than one intereſt in the world that could have detained me in the purſuit of you. It was preciſely that, however, which happened to occur. I met on the way one of my countrymen, from whom I learnt ſome particulars relative to France which I had long moſt anxiously waited to hear. He referred me for further authentic details to another mutual friend, who was that very morning to ſet out on his return thither. Not a ſingle moment was to be loſt. I drove with all the rapidity I could command to the lodgings of the latter, and was fortunate enough to meet with him. As the ſituation of our affairs was in all reſpects alike, the account he gave me of his, left me no reaſon to doubt the event of my own repreſentations at Paris. I entruſted to him a memorial and other papers I had long ſince prepared againſt a ſimilar occaſion, and I rely ſo much both on his zeal, and the juſtice of my cauſe, as

to aſſure myſelf that I ſhall quickly obtain the proper paſsports and ſecurity. If, in addition to this, I ſhould be happy enough to recover my family property, how joyfully ſhall I ſhare my affluence with the man who was the friend of my poverty!"

Vaudreuil had ſpoken ſo long, that I really began to apprehend he never intended to conclude. He was no talker in general, and therefore I wondered the more at him. But his heart was full of his ſubject, as I could ſee in his eyes, and I believe he felt an abſolute neceſſity for thus pouring it out. In ſpite of my impatience I had not failed, however, at intervals, to be both flattered and touched by his recital: and under any other circumſtances no gratification would have been greater perhaps than that of liſtening to it. I had juſt then, however, a much greater in view, and, I therefore, hurried him away. I had

gathered

gathered from the conclufion of his difcourfe that he was yet ignorant of my uncle's death, and the change it had occafioned in my worldly concerns. This was not furprifing; fince that I fhould have become, during his abfence, either a gueft or even a conftant refident in my uncle's houfe, was among the occurrences of life that might naturally happen. It was now time to explain my fituation to him. I could fee that he was much ftruck with it, and felt as though Claudina and himfelf were fuddenly rendered bankrupts both in fortune and in love. But the native dignity and candour of his mind made him quickly recover from the furprife, and he rejoiced in my profperity.

"Poor St. Victoire!" faid he, fmiling, as we entered his lodgings: "his pride will not even have the confolation of believing that he is going to take an impoverifhed

man

man to his bosom!—I was far from being sure that St. Victoire's pride was of so generous a nature: on the contrary I was strongly inclined to suspect that my affluence would be the only consoling circumstance to him under the mortification of having me for a brother-in-law. I made no comment, however, on Vaudreuil's speech; nor indeed had I time. Claudina was before my eyes—she was in my arms: more lovely, as it appeared to me, than ever: for that pure pleasure which springs immediately from the heart embellished her features; her person was in reality improved. —She was grown taller:—her figure, without losing its slightness, was more formed: and she had a decided character of countenance. A scene of the most unalloyed transport succeeded, and it was not immediately that I could recollect myself enough to think at all of St. Victoire. When I did, I was not unmoved by his paleness

and apparent depreſſion. His arm was ſtill in bandages, and the loſs of blood which he had ſuſtained had altered him very conſiderably. The ground between us had been rendered perfectly ſmooth by the kind offices of his brother and ſiſter. We therefore ſaluted each other with ſome degree of cordiality; and both ſtudiouſly avoided all reference to the paſt. As the houſe I had lately come into poſſeſſion of was ſpacious, I earneſtly intreated the whole family to take up their abode there: and this was the more neceſſary, as the ſituation of the invalid demanded comforts and an attention he could not ſo well receive elſewhere.

"It ſeems only a queſtion whether we ſhall live with you, or on you, my good friend," ſaid Vaudreuil, perceiving my propoſal had given birth to ſome ſcruples:—"for my part I think it is very clear which

we ought, for our own gratification, to choofe." To this decifion Claudina and St. Victoire, without much difficulty, acceded. I ftaid feveral hours with them, and then returned home, to give my mother notice of the vifitors fhe was fo foon to receive. Her furprife was at firft very great. She queftioned me abundantly concerning Claudina; and I could eafily difcover that fhe fecretly regretted my not having chofen an Englifhwoman: though, even in that cafe, I felt that one of her own country would have been ftill preferable in her eyes; but fhe was too indulgent and too deeply interefted in my happinefs to raife any obftacles to my prefent plans, and on my part I was perfuaded that fhe had only to fee the woman I had chofen in order to be convinced no other was fo well worthy to be my choice.

Before evening every thing was in readi-

neſs to receive our gueſts. My mother herſelf accompanied me at a very early hour to fetch the lovely Claudina to that home of which ſhe was ſoon to become the miſtreſs. My uncle's carriage, as he had been old and infirm, was a conveyance perfectly convenient to St. Victoire, and he arrived at my door without much fatigue.

"It is the fate of our family to be overwhelmed with your bounties, Monſieur," ſaid he, as I gave him my arm to mount the ſtairs.—I thought it was ſaid proudly too. He was ſufficiently a man of the world, however, not to overlook that portion of its goods with which I was ſurrounded. I ſaw him eye the apartment we ſat in, which had been indeed ſomewhat expenſively furniſhed by my uncle, and I could fancy I heard him ſay to himſelf—"Humph! This then is the houſe of an Engliſh merchant!"

chant!"—Vaudreuil and Claudina, on the contrary, ſaw not a mirror or a carpet it contained. That dear girl's ſpirits ſoon roſe in ſympathy with mine, and we became a pair of the moſt giddy, laughing lovers that can eaſily be imagined. To look at us, indeed, any body would have ſuppoſed we had never known a ſorrow or a care: and Vaudreuil, who had hitherto ſeen nothing in his ſiſter but a pretty penſive young woman, or in me but a ſombre man of buſineſs, was perfectly aſtoniſhed at the metamorphoſis in both. We quickly ſeduced him, in ſpite of his habitual ſerioufneſs, into a participation of our mirth. And St. Victoire himſelf, though a little ſtarched at firſt, yet, before the evening cloſed, forgot his indiſpoſition, his pride, and his prejudices, and condeſcended to have more than one hearty laugh along with us. I was very ſorry when the hour of parting and repoſe came. Nevertheleſs

I ſlept ſoundly, for I was certain of ſeeing Claudina again in the morning; and, in return, ſhe has ſince aſſured me ſhe never had a more delightful ſlumber than that ſhe enjoyed under the protection of my roof.

I had judged rightly with reſpect to my mother: ſhe felt herſelf the happieſt of creatures on being thus ſuddenly embo-ſomed in a youthful circle, each individual of which looked up for her approving ſmile to ſanction their own. The inge-nuouſneſs, the youthful gaiety, the ſweet playfulneſs of Claudina's character and manners, completely won her affections, and ſhe ſoon lived in her ſight nearly as much as I did: nor did the former fail to cultivate this tender regard by every office of duty and attention on her part.

Our firſt buſineſs was to make a little eſtabliſhment

eſtabliſhment for St. Victoire that ſhould enſure the recovery of his health, and then to forward thoſe meaſures that promiſed to be favourable for Vaudreuil. We were ſucceſsful in both inſtances. The applications made by the latter were approved by the men in power of his own country, and he had very ſoon the ſatisfaction of learning that he might return thither without danger—to ſay the leaſt: but, in fact, he had every reaſon to believe that he ſhould be reinſtated in great part of his rights. This was certainly no muſic to the ears of St. Victoire: nevertheleſs it was better than that the whole family ſhould be proſcribed; and the generous character of his brother left the Count no cauſe to doubt but he would derive his ſhare of advantage from the return of the former to France. Nice as this buſineſs was to ſettle, Vaudreuil and I contrived to arrange it between us. For, in ſpite of his political opinions, he was not without a delicate

but

but ſtrong repugnance to the diſpoſſeſsing an elder branch of the family of his rights in life. As to Claudina, ſhe was out of of the queſtion. I was rich enough for both, and I, therefore, lent no ear to any thing that could be ſaid on that ſubject. She was now, alas! not ſo ignorant of the real ſufferings of poverty as ſhe had been; and this knowledge, which I had at one time ſo deprecated and earneſtly endeavoured to ſhield her from, became in the end an affecting monitor that taught her to feel for others when ſhe ceaſed to have any thing to feel or fear on that head for herſelf.

My mourning for my uncle obliged me to poſtpone my marriage for a ſhort time: it would indeed have been poſtponed ſtill longer but for the neceſſity of Vaudreuil's return to France. Both Claudina and myſelf were ſolicitous that our union ſhould be ſanctioned by the preſence of that tender

der and amiable brother whom we were ſo ſoon to loſe. How ſincerely did we all lament that the tide of human affairs ſhould ſeparate beings united by every principle of affection or intellect!—How gloomy was the conſideration that the human race at large, accuſtomed to blood, ſhould forget in mutual animoſity that ſacred tie common to all!—Surely it is for the liberal-minded and humane of every nation to counteract the deſtructive influence of general prejudice, by extending and ſtrengthening, in their private habits, thoſe ſocial feelings which bid man acknowledge his fellow-creature in every quarter of the globe.

On the day preceding that fixed for Vaudreuil's departure, Claudina and I were united. St. Victoire himſelf beſtowed her upon me. I ſhould have been better pleaſed to have owed the gift, dear as it was, to his brother: but Vaudreuil and I underſtood

ftood ... other, and that was enough. A moft forrowful parting fucceeded: but it has been the only real chagrin that has clouded my life fince my marriage. There are heretics who will fmile at this fentence. To fuch I anfwer, that I have not yet been married many years; and even if I had——but they will fmile again!—There is no curing thefe fort of people!

My mother, good woman, often looks at us, and obferves "that marriages are (according to the old proverb) certainly made in Heaven." So alfo fay I! but fhe, in the fimplicity of her heart, draws her conclufions from the extraordinary circumftance that occafioned our meeting; I, mine, from the ftill more extraordinary one of our defiring never to part!

St. Victoire has entirely recovered the ill confequences of his wound, and lives

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at no great diſtance from us on [torn]
remitted him by his brother, who has retrieved great part of the family fortune. The former has not yet, however, forgotten his paſſion for nobleſſe, and is a little inclined to drop my acquaintance if we happen ſuddenly to encounter each other in Bond-Street or Pall-Mall. I forgive him: for he keeps the firſt company, and is a fine man. Vaudreuil's circle is ſmaller, and he, I am aſſured, is a very happy one. His happineſs, indeed, as well as mine, is of that tranquil nature at which men of the world will wonder. Be it ſo! I neither envy them their inflamed paſſions nor ſophiſticated taſtes.

As leiſure has ſerved, Claudina, and myſelf, in company with my mother, have more than once viſited our little native ſpot on the banks of the Clyde. When, in the enjoyment of rural beauty there, we do not fail to commemorate the worthy

paſtor,

parlour, our kind and firſt friend; we talk of his flowers—his bees—and *his fun*. We mutually agree that none ever ſhone ſo brightly to our eyes before. We have long ſince eſtabliſhed a correſpondence with the good old man, continued by ſmall but grateful offerings on our part; and we ſometimes even amuſe ourſelves with chimerical projects, of preſenting to his eyes thoſe fragile but intereſting human bloſſoms, which alone could to us embelliſh his garden, as they form the chief charm of our own.

FINIS.

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